THE PHILIPPINES' NO. 1 HOME MAGAZINE • OCTOBER 2015 • P150

myhome

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info.calligaris@furnitalia.com.ph

CEBU SHOWROOM
Witco Marketing, Inc.
868-A A.S. Fortuna St.
Banilad, Mandaue City
Ph. +63 32 3439340 Fax +63 32 3439372
wmi@witco.com.ph

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Nix Alañon
Editor-in-Chief

Cy Yambao
Assistant Editor

Andrea Arines
Editorial Coordinator

ART

Camille del Rosario
Junior Art Director

Juan C. Banayat Jr.
Final Artist

Studio 100 Photographers
Mike Cuevas
Mark Jacob
Floyd Jhocson
Ed Simon

SPECIAL PROJECTS

Art Director
Kenneth Rivera

Copywriters
Francesca Pangilinan
Stephanie Puyod

Graphic Designers
Mia Catedrilla
EJ Kampitan
Aerish Sta. Ana

Make-up Artist
Lynn Niduaza

CONTRIBUTORS

Writers
Kevin Abalos, Bettina Bernabe, Stephanie Cancio, Kyrah Cheng, Kathlyn dela Cruz, Miko Ilas, Sibyl Layag, Zachary Lim, Miguel Llona, Jasmin Magtown, Toni Medina, Andrea Portugal, Dindin Reyes, Michelle Tiu Tan, Kitkat Torres, Mayte Uyenco

Photographers
Reau Gutierrez, Mark Marcelino, Greg Mayo, Neal Oshima

Associate Publisher
Reichelle Nicole Vergara

Marketing Director and Group Publisher
Maite Tamparong-Uy

Editorial Admin Associate
Erica Luna

Group Art Director
Mel Patrick H. Kasingsing

AVP - Creatives & Production
Suki Salvador

ONE MEGA GROUP

Executive Vice President
ARCHIE CARRASCO

OPERATIONS
Research & Financial Analyst
SOPHIE MENOR
Admin Associate - Sales & Marketing
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ARRIANE SANCHEZ, KRISTINE YAN

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Senior Web Developer YASMIN OPLADO
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STUDIO 100
Senior Photographer ED SIMON
Photographers MIKE CUEVAS, MARK JACOB, RON MENDOZA, JOHN OCAMPO, YUKIE SARTO
Videographer IAN VILLARUZ
Technical Custodian JR RAMIREZ

Photographed by Greg Mayo

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CIRCULATION
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FRANCIS LAMOSTE, ABIGAILE PAULINO
Team Leaders ARNOLD ABOGADA, LECIE NON, NAPOLEON ROPEROGA, DARLITO TAGLAY JR.

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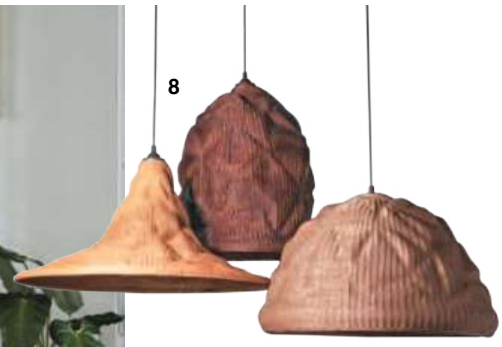

Photographed by Vincent Coscolluela

REGULARS

2 MASTHEAD
6 EDITOR'S NOTE
120 DIRECTORY

TIMELESS TRENDS

8 HOMEGROWN
10 HIGH DRAMA
EBONY AND IVORY
12 EUROPEAN CLASSICS
EAST MEETS WEST
14 MAJESTIC METALS
IN RETROSPECT
16 SIMPLY SCANDINAVIAN
ETHNIC CHIC
18 RELAXED ECLECTIC
UNFINISHED BUSINESS
20 MONOCHROMES
RESORT LIVING
22 BARE ESSENTIALS
ALL THAT JAZZ

LET'S SHOP

24 YOUR DREAM HOME
Be a step closer to your home furnishing goals with these best finds from MC Home Depot

HOMES

26 NINA SANTAMARIA
The greatest fulfilment comes from designing to improve lives
30 GELO DEL MUNDO
The ability to adapt keeps him on top of the game
34 ROSSY YABUT ROJALES
Spreading sunshine through vibrant colors and standout patterns
36 LOR CALMA
Finding beauty in simplicity
40 ALICE ERFE
Turning vacant spaces into cozy homes
42 CHAT FORES
Her interior design journey crosses over various design styles and a diverse clientele
46 BUDJI LAYUG AND ROYAL PINEDA
On breathing life into their vision of the modern Filipino home
50 LEO ALMERIA
Many promising years ahead for the ultimate visionary
54 EMPIRE DESIGNS
Opening your eyes to the true meaning of luxury
58 JENNIE DE DIOS
Creativity that lasts
60 ROCK ROBINS
Traveling and working on a family business both feed his creative mind
64 WILMER LOPEZ
On the life lessons his grandfather has instilled in him
66 FRENJICK QUESADA
An ear for listening and a passion for contemporary eclectic designs
70 ASTRID SANGIL
This once self-doubting interior designer is now making a mark in the industry
74 FTA DESIGN
Bringing homes a touch of contemporary eclectic style

BEST OF THE BEST

80 FURNITURE DESIGN
Vito Selma
82 HOME RETAIL
KISH
86 LIGHTING DESIGN
Azcor
88 CONTEMPORARY PHILIPPINE ARCHITECTURE
Manny Miñana
92 INDUSTRIAL DESIGN
Eric Paras
96 SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY
TADECO Home
98 CONTEMPORARY ARTS
Ryan Villamael
100 GRAPHIC DESIGN
Dan Matutina of Plus63 Design Co.
104 SCULPTING
Ramon Orlina
106 COMMERCIAL DESIGN
Noel Bernardo
108 EVENT DESIGN
Moss Manila Design House
110 FLORAL DESIGN
Robert Blancaflor
112 TRADE SHOW
Manila FAME
114 TRENDSETTERS
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118 INFLUENCER
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American Standard

Photographed by Floyd Jhocson of Studio 100

From left: Assistant Editor Cy Yambao, Editor-in-Chief Nix Alañon, Editorial Coordinator Andrea Arines, and Junior Art Director Camille del Rosario

Through the YEARS

All magazines, before coming out as a finished product on newsstands, go through a rigorous production process. We look at trends and new developments to ensure that we are always on top of our game and deliver only the best that we could in each issue. Now, imagine having done that for the past 15 years, every single month since the year 2000. Yet, as swiftly as time has passed and with MyHome evolving to what it is today, we believe we still carry that same seed of MyHome's initial vision 15 years ago in most things that we do.

A month shy from marking my first year as editor-in-chief, I claim that this experience has been nothing short of thrilling. It still is a continuous learning process, but I am quite happy where things are going. I can only be excited for what the future holds for us, and it looks very bright from where I stand.

It takes dedication and perseverance to produce a new issue each month, but ultimately, it requires teamwork. Over the past 15 years, many contributors and other industry professionals have shared their talents with this magazine. Moreover, many extremely qualified editors came ahead of me in this very specific role. This month, we applaud all of them and their efforts, our readers, and even our advertisers, who have significantly helped MyHome reach where it is today. If it weren't for them, there would be no reason for us to celebrate today.

This anniversary is intended to be a festivity of our good fortune, and to recognize a few chosen and exceptional individuals in the fields of art and design. As we were adding the final touches on this issue, there is an undeniable sense of fulfillment that came upon us as we wrapped up this special edition that would definitely rank as one of the best we have ever produced.

Nix Alañon
Editor-in-Chief

PERGO
OFFICE:
411-5901; 749-1841
261-0739; 263-8040
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637-5116; 483-3176
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15 *Timeless Trends*

Photographed by **Mike Cuevas and Mark Jacob of Studio 100, Reau Gutierrez, And Mark Marcelino**

Interior design trends may come and go, but there are a selected few that have proven to withstand the test of time. A cut above the rest, these 15 widely used trends even in commercial spaces are sure to stay for their emphasis on comfort, function, and elegance. Keep your homes always updated with these classic themes that will never get old.

1

Homegrown

Filipino designs that capitalize on indigenous materials and the country's rich culture

Gabby Lichauco x Zacarias 1925 pendant lamps, P18,000 each, available at Open House

Gustavia **cabinet,** P75,000, available at Atelier Aguila

E. Murio ***Mezzaluna***, P10,600, available at Open House

Santamaria **stool,** P13,500, available at KISH

Wooden tray, available at Philux

Tabourettes, P22,500 each, available at W/17

Old molave balusters, P3,500 (big) and P3,000 (small), available at Atelier Aguila

Basket chair, P17,000, available at Open House

Ikebana **chair,** available at Studio Vito Selma

Nubian **benches,** P48,000 each, available at Atelier Aguila

Additional photos courtesy of **Philux and Studio Vito Selma**

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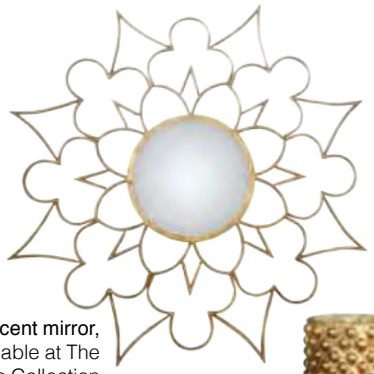
Luxurious living in a space characterized by glitz and glamour



Accent mirror, available at The Pietro Collection

Table lamp, available at The Pietro Collection

Gold textured votive holder, P299, available at H&M Home

Gold wave tray stand, P7,194, available at Moss Manila Home

Tealight candle holders, available at The Pietro Collection

Brass bamboo box, P24,800, available at Blue Carreon Home

Silver sequined pillowcase, P599, available at H&M Home

Mirrored nesting tables, available at The Pietro Collection

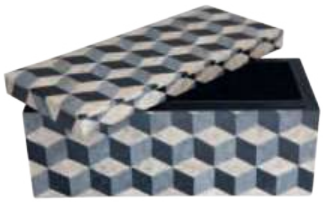
Pearl diamond ivory pillow, available at Ethan Allen

***Chesterfield* sofa,** P80,000, available at Moss Manila Home

3

Ebony and Ivory

Nothing quite as pure and versatile as decorating with black-and-white



Milan box, P7,000, available at Blue Carreon Home

Candle holder, P1,024, available at Wilcon Depot

White glass vase, P852, available at Wilcon Depot

Textured zigzag pillowcase, P1,190, available at H&M Home

Owl print pillowcase, P499, available at H&M Home

***Dito* rug,** available at BoConcept

Chevron night table, P41,500, available at Blue Carreon Home

***Leslie* armchair,** available at Minotti

Additional photos courtesy of **BoConcept, Ethan Allen, H&M Home, and Minotti**

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4

European Classics

European flair with the occasional touch of flamboyance

Ceramic candles, P3,750 each, available at Blue Carreon Home

Nickel wall clock, available at Ethan Allen

Gold deco tray, P1,190, available at H&M Home

Five-candle candelabra, P29,914.50, available at Moss Manila Home

Table lamp, P3,800, available at Lucina Home

***Mathilda* armchair,** P30,000, available at Lady Scott Jones

***Gregg* accent chair,** P48,800, available at Home Matters

Accent table, available at The Pietro Collection

5

East Meets West

Influenced by age-old traditions, and a culture of harmony and balance

Bi-Disc white, P37,500, available at W/17

Black box, P8,990, available at Liwen Furniture

Dynasty armchair in limpit shell, P94,500, available at W/17

Chinese garden stool, P10,500, available at Blue Carreon Home

Tang red stool, P9,990, available at Liwen Furniture

Round back armchair, P224,000, available at W/17

Black stool, P9,990, available at Liwen Furniture

Lute table in clamstone, P124,500, available at W/17

Additional photos courtesy of **Ethan Allen, H&M Home, and Lady Scott Jones**

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6

Majestic Metals

Add pieces of interest with these shiny or distressed metallic décor

Table lamp, available at The Pietro Collection

Accent mirror, available at The Pietro Collection

Lidded jars in speckled silver (P699) **and bronze** (P599), available at H&M Home

***Raschida* bowls,** P4,950 (medium) and P1,950 (small), available at W/17

Metal chair, available at The Pietro Collection

Metallic drawers, available at The Pietro Collection

Foot stool, available at Philux

***Milani* 3-seater sofa,** P21,250.40, available at Wilcon Depot

7

In Retrospect

Mid-century modern designs that combine natural elements with geometric shapes and curves

***Beat* tall gray and fat black lights by Tom Dixon,** available at MOs Design

Vitra turbine wall clock, available at MOs Design

Easy chair AG-X in walnut gray, P14,252, available at Wilcon Depot

***Stockton* bar stool,** available at Philux

Cast brass candle holders, P15,000, available at Blue Carreon Home

***Cubic* rug,** available at BoConcept

***Finn* cabinet,** P85,000, available at KISH

Additional photos courtesy of **BoConcept, H&M Home, MOs Design, Philux, and Tom Dixon**

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8

Simply Scandinavian

Muted tones, natural materials, and minimal ornamentation define form and function

Wood sphere, P1,650, available at West Elm

***Scape* dinnerware set,** available at West Elm

Vases, P2,250 (large) and P995 (small), available at West Elm

Pillow, available at Dimesione

Deer print pillowcase, P499, available at H&M Home

***Embla* chair,** available at Philux

***Valencia* bench** available at Philux

***Stockholm* side tables,** available at Philux

***Embla* buffet,** available at Philux

9

Ethnic Chic

Infuse a room with culture through vibrant color palettes and intricate patterns

Cow skull with horns, P25,000, available at Atelier Aguila

Pillows, available at West Elm

Tribal print jars, available at The Pietro Collection

Jar, available at The Pietro Collection

Console *Tamarindo*, P88,000, available at Atelier Aguila

Armchair, available at Urban Abode

Brass bowl with stand, available at The Pietro Collection

Additional photos courtesy of **H&M Home and Philux**

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SCANDI NIANA

NORTH EDSA

MEGAMALL

ROCKWELL

LRI

2016

SHANGRILA

AT THE FORT

10

Relaxed Eclectic

A melting pot of styles, this selection presents harmony amidst diversity

Copper pendant light by Tom Dixon, available at MOs Design

Chop box in serpentine, P5,950, available at W/17

Brass pineapple, P7,800, available at Blue Carreon Home

Pillowcase red, P599, and textured grey, P1,190, available at H&M Home

Storage box, available at The Pietro Collection

Gold *faux* deer antler, P5,808, available at Moss Manila Home

Nadira rug, available at Calligaris

Hexagon accent table, available at The Pietro Collection

Splitback Frej chair by Innovation, available at Living Space

11

Unfinished Business

The charm of industrial designs is their raw appeal

Industrial metal sconce, P2,800, available at Lucina Home

Adams cage, P1,740, available at Match Contract

Miller droplight, P2,930, available at Match Contract

Boston chair, P3,895, available at Match Contract

Metal stool, available at The Pietro Collection

Stockton stool, P3,350, available at Match Contract

Distress*Claude*, P3,400, available at Match Contract

Metal tray, P1,190, available at H&M Home

Wooden wire basket, available at H&M Home

Additional photos courtesy of Calligaris, H&M Home, Innovation, and Tom Dixon

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12

Monochromes

This pared down color palette allows for a play on bolder patterns and textures

Pillow, available at BoConcept

Pillow, available at Dimensione

Ecusson **table lamp,** available at Roche Bobois

Wooden tray, available at The Pietro Collection

Gava **rug,** available at Calligaris

Aura **armchair by Giorgetti,** available at Furnitalia

Deconstructed **floor cushions by Innovation,** available at Living Space

Scighera **couch by Cassina,** available at Furnitalia

13

Resort Living

Vibrant but not garish, these pieces for laidback living gives emphasis on the outdoors

Sebu **pillow,** P2,450 (medium), available at KISH

Frodo **hanging lamp,** available at Outdoor Solutions

Beached corals, P7,500 (set of 3), available at Atelier Aguila

Holly **swing,** P22,500, available at W/17

Solara **end table,** available at Studio Vito Selma

Yin & Yang **armchair,** available at Kenneth Cobonpue Manila

Joseph **sunchair,** P42,500, available at W/17

Additional photos courtesy of **BoConcept, Calligaris, Furnitalia, Innovation, Kenneth Cobonpue Manila, Roche Bobois, and Studio Vito Selma**

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Bare Essentials

What you see is what you get in pieces streamlined to a sleek aesthetic

Pillows, available at BoConcept

Turbine table lamp, available at Roche Bobois

Nonette **table lamp,** available at Roche Bobois

Oslo **vases,** available at Roche Bobois

Landfield **rug,** available at Minotti

Elliott **side table,** available at Minotti

720 Lady **armchair by Marco Zanuso for Cassina,** available at Furnitalia

15

All that Jazz

Art Deco designs create a bold look with their geometric and angular forms

Gold waste basket, P1,190, available at H&M Home

Sunburst mirror, available at The Pietro Collection

Pillow, available at BoConcept

Star print pillowcase, P499, available at H&M Home

Table lamp, available The Pietro Collection

Vara **dining chair,** P16,700, available at Home Matters

Soho **drink table,** P24,800, available at Moss Manila Home

Besnon **coffee table,** available at Minotti

Additional photos courtesy of **BoConcept, Furnitalia, H&M Home, Minotti, and Roche Bobois**

The HOMESTORE *Collections II*

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Incorporating beauty with function and technology, the bathroom is transformed from mere functional space into a space that enhances your life. Health and wellbeing to be synonymous with style and utility is what every homeowner would dream of. Aside from basic bathroom fixtures such as basins, waterclosets, mixers, faucets, showers and enclosures, Homestore proudly recommends its specialty products: Saunas, Steam, Massage tubs, Bathroom furniture and current innovative offerings. Others try but cannot match our service, brand stability and product selections. Herein we present aspirational designs at affordable prices.

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Contemporary geometric styling and sophisticated design features ensure the ultimate bath experience.

A great shower not only invigorates- it inspires. From supersized drenchers to compact designs in chic metal or ABS, Homestore has the one for you.

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A house furnished with the best finds from **MC Home Depot**

Photographed by **Mark Jacob of Studio 100 and Reau Gutierrez**

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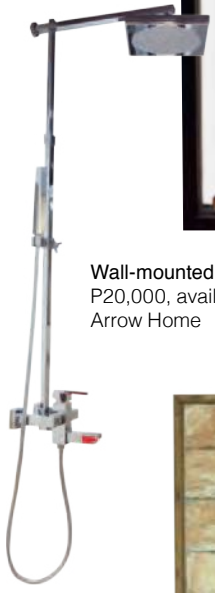
Customized dresser, prize available upon request at Ideal Home

Pendant lights, P9,500, available at Metallite Illuminazione

Frameless shower enclosure (10mm clear tempered glass with accessories), P28,494, available at S.G.O. Phils. Inc.



Wall-mounted shower set, P20,000, available at Arrow Home

Doormaster HDF moulded door, P1,515, available at Bestank

Spa chair, P10,000, available at Kreative Creations

Putter cabinet handle, P80/pc., available at Asian Home Hardware

Antique brass cabinet handle, P65/pc., available at Asian Home Hardware

Natural Stone–Piedra Rosa 4x4 cm, P1,700/sq.m., available at Level Land Corp.

Natural Stone–Sahara Chips, P1,500 per sack, available at Level Land Corp.

Ceramic tiles (Pietra B100–Beige: 30x60 cm), P108/pc., available at Baldoza

Ceramic Tiles (Decoro 140–White: 30x60 cm), P108/pc. available at Baldoza

Rojo Cebuano marble, price available upon request at Teresa Marble Corp.

MC Home Depot Fort Bonifacio 32nd St. cor. Bonifacio Boulevard, Fort Bonifacio Global City, Taguig *Phone* (02) 815 4759 *Website* mchomedepot.com
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MC Home Depot Pampanga Jose Abad Santos Ave., Brgy. Dolores, San Fernando City, Pampanga *Phone* (045) 445 4408

Hanging rope light, P2,800, available at Light Flow Trading

Mistral–Brown and Mistral–Stone Blue (368mx1.27m), P560/pc. and P1,600/sq.m. (supply and stalled), available at Cabinet Members Inc.

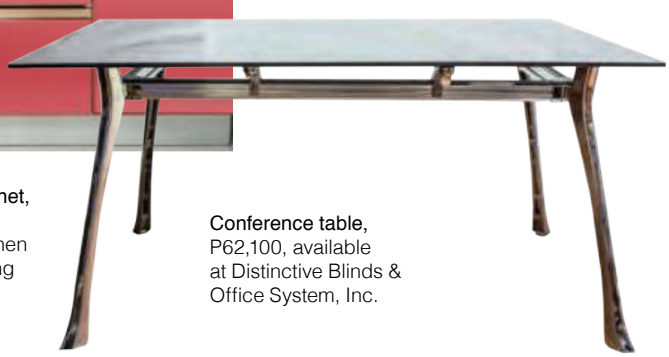
Roller blinds (Black-out), P179/sq.ft., available at Sapporo

Low ceiling lamp, P18,000, available at Luxen

Ceiling lamp (IDL-Dakota), P3,080, available at De-lights and Lamps

Modular kitchen cabinet, price available upon request at Linuo Kitchen Cabinet Manufacturing

Accent chair, P12,800, available at La Vida Verde Home Furnishing



Conference table, P62,100, available at Distinctive Blinds & Office System, Inc.

A renovation project, this house in Laguna was a cookie-cutter American-style house before interior designer Nina Santamaria transformed it into a modern home with Zen sensibilities.

Photographed by Joseph Pascual

Nina Santamaria

The greatest fulfilment comes from designing to improve lives

Written by **Cy Yambao** | *Photos courtesy of* **Grupo Santamaria**

"I had to challenge myself and my design team to avoid the trappings of a Zen look as defined in today's world of fast information," shares Nina. "My instructions were no Buddha heads, bamboo sticks, *tatami* mats, gongs, or sand filling up bowls."

"Growing up, I loved browsing through my mom's *Better Homes & Gardens* magazines, somehow learning how beautiful, clean, and comfortable homes should look like," says interior designer Nina Santamaria. Even as a young girl, the future looked clear for Nina, who used to spend afternoons daydreaming about the houses she wants to build for her precious little dolls.

Years later, imagination turns into reality as Nina carves a name for herself in the industry and eventually establishes her own design firm, Grupo Santamaria. "After managing several home stores such as Diretso and KISH, I decided to resign and focus on slowly building my own clientele," she shares. "For three years, I did freelance work before finally opening my small office in LRI. Starting with a staff of four in 2003, it is now a fully operating interior design firm with an extended office in Cebu."

Despite having taken on numerous residential and commercial projects, Nina hopes for an opportunity to design for communities, particularly institutional projects like schools, public libraries, government offices, or places of worship. In the same way that she wants this discipline to be appreciated by a wider audience, Nina likewise improves her craft by expanding her horizons and looking at the world from a different light.

"I take inspiration from history, travel, culture, and the arts," says Nina, who is also influenced by nature and surfing. "It really changes your perspective when you are being thrown around by the ocean and feeling very small against the strong currents. It defines the impact I want to have in the world and on the homes I will one day leave behind for families to use."

Aside from a clean aesthetic, interiors designed by Nina have furniture pieces and accessories that are carefully selected according to her clients' lifestyle, personality, and budget.

The most rewarding aspect of being an interior designer, says Nina, is knowing that you did your best in designing for your clients' needs, and having full confidence that they will be using the spaces in comfort and style.

"As a designer, I would like to think that it is best to dive deep into the essence of a concept and apply this through the proper choice of colors and materials, space planning, and orientation with the site's natural surroundings," explains Nina. "If Zen is about harmony, simplicity, and discipline, then that's what I want the interiors to project and maybe even teach to the users."

Interior designer Nina Santamaria likewise improves her craft by expanding her horizons and looking at the world from a different light

Gelo del Mundo

The ability to adapt keeps him on top of the game

Written by **Mayte Uyenco** | *Photos courtesy of* **Gelo del Mundo**

Textures, linear patterns, and muted tones blend harmoniously in this living area, which seems bigger and brighter because of the windows and mirrors.

Growing up in a family that was fond of art has greatly contributed to Gelo del Mundo's successful career in interior design. At a young age, his eyes have already been trained to see beauty and pay close attention to detail. The influence of his mother, who was fond of redecorating the home, and uncle, who shared his love for painting, urged Gelo to open his heart to the craft.

"One should continuously learn and improve his craft," says Gelo, who focused on his growth as a designer after completing his studies at the Philippine School of Interior Design. "You should be able to look at your projects and say, 'I have improved.'" How he manages to determine what appeals to his clients' discerning tastes is something he has learned through dedication and hard work—not to mention the mentorship of Jie Pambid, who has taught Gelo how to value such lessons as an artist.

Recommendation plays a big part in how Gelo has gotten this far in his career, especially because he makes it a point to give his clients no reason not to love his work. "Every project is special to me," he says. "There is always something to learn, and it makes me a better designer."

Interior designer Gelo del Mundo's work is often characterized by juxtaposition. There is always something different to add an element of surprise.

Gelo's projects are all a combination of different materials and modern silhouettes that add character to the space.

Being able to design the bedroom, where his clients spend most of their time, is one of Gelo's favorite things about being an interior designer.

"You should be able to look at your projects and say, 'I have improved"

Making a room as functional as it is beautiful is a skill that can be mastered by a true artist like Gelo, who likewise optimizes the elements involved in the design.

Interior designer Rossy Yabut Rojales' style has always involved finding the perfect livable mix between colors, patterns, and individuality.

Photographed by Mike Cuevas of Studio 100

Rossy Yabut Rojales

Spreading sunshine through vibrant colors and standout patterns

Written by **Dindin Reyes** | *Photos courtesy of* **Heim Interiors**

Above: Rossy says she enjoys working with creative types, like she did with actresses such as Anne Curtis, Kris Aquino, and Solenn Heusaff, whose home is pictured above.

Left: Rossy's design theory centers on the idea of bringing to life what a happy home looks like.

For a young Rossy Yabut Rojales, idyllic Sundays meant scouring the city with her parents for furniture pieces that would make the happiness in their home something they could touch, see, and feel. Years later, Rossy has made defining a home through heartfelt interiors her life's work, incidentally making her one of Manila's most sought-after designers.

Rossy's lifestyle store Heima and design firm, Heim Interiors, which she runs with husband Bong, both come from the Icelandic way of saying "at home." Unsurprisingly, when asked about her style, she humbly labels it happy interiors. "We make sure that we deliver their dream space," says Rossy. It sounds straightforward but then, how easy is it to know what a person means by happiness? What more to express this in space?

To look at Rossy's designs is to see happiness as play. "I can't even emphasize how much I love colors and patterns," she says. "I play around with materials such as brass, natural stones, and different fabric textures." Happiness at Heima is found in vivid living color, unique statement pieces, and patterns that invite you to imagine. But even after all its boldness, it makes perfect sense to live in her creations. Just as how Rossy forms relationships with her clients like Kris Aquino and Solenn Heusaff, the spaces she builds form a relationship with the people inhabiting them. Rossy's reward, she says, is "to see people smile, to witness a family grow, and to just know that you are spreading beauty one home at a time."

A high ceiling, glass windows, plenty of floor space, and a touch of nature make Architect Lor Calma's home a breathable space.

Lor Calma

Finding beauty in simplicity

Written by **Stephanie Cancio** | *Photographed by* **Ed Simon of Studio 100**

The staircase in Lor's home is a minimalist art piece in itself with its spiral shape and dark wooden steps that complement its black-and-white color scheme.

What is Lor Calma known for? When he himself was asked, he said, "I want to be known as Lor Calma from a barrio in Mt. Arayat!" But to many, Architect Lor Calma has grown exponentially from his humble beginnings, now excelling in various forms of art. Today, he is known as an exemplary artist in architecture, interior design, furniture design, and even painting and sculpture.

Lor started as a furniture designer in Aguinaldo's Department Store during the 1950s, which then led him to his first major interior design project for the Del Rosario brothers' home. He painted their old house white, the floors black, and added statement pieces—all true to the modern, minimalist, and clean style he is known for today. *"Yung minimalism ko, noon pa, ganoon na ako, ayoko ng borloloy,"* says Lor.

Initiating modernism in the Philippines, Lor continued to pave the way for interior designers in the country by establishing the Philippine Institute of Interior Design, the Philippine School of Interior Design, and various design firms. The most notable would be Lor Calma & Partners, which is still running today with Lor as president and his son, Ed Calma, as the design principal.

What is Lor Calma known for? His son, Ed, says it perfectly: "He has this innate talent of taking something out of nowhere and turning it into something extraordinary."

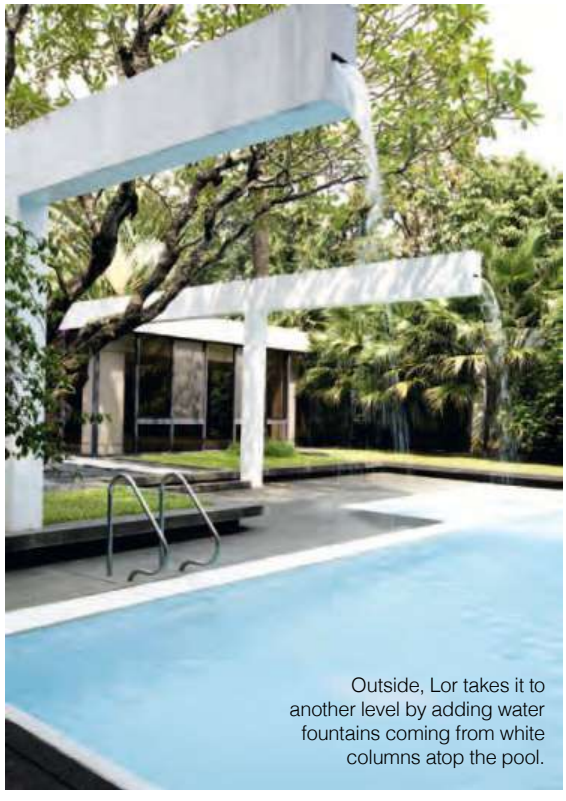
References: Sibyl Layag, "Lor and Ed Calma," in BluPrint Special Issue 3 2014, 100-105.
Judith Torres, "Iconoclast," in BluPrint Volume 5 2014, 44-50.

Left: Lor's sculptures featuring a combination of geometric shapes and bright colors stand out in his home.

Below: A pop of color makes all the difference in this space dominated by sleek furniture pieces, marble flooring, and fine lines.

While Lor's kitchen features modern yet comfortable seating for the simple round breakfast table, majority of the pieces in his home are tied to his Filipino heritage, as seen in their design or local materials used.

"He has this innate talent of taking something out of nowhere and turning it into something extraordinary"



Outside, Lor takes it to another level by adding water fountains coming from white columns atop the pool.

Interior designer Alice Erfe uses hints of blue in various elements of the home to tie the space together.

Photo courtesy of Alice Erfe

Alice Erfe

Turning vacant spaces into cozy homes

Written by **Stephanie Cancio**
Photos courtesy of **Rockwell Land**

"My style is simple elegance—understated," says Alice Erfe, a household name in the fields of interior design and architecture. Most notably known for her design projects for Rockwell Land model units, among others, Alice designs spaces with the style philosophy "form follows function." Always keeping the homeowner's needs in mind, Alice combines style, ambiance, and comfort to create the perfect environment. "My ultimate goal is to guide, direct, and achieve an interior design that will reflect the client's personality," she says.

The ability to transform an empty unit into a cozy home is what Alice loves about designing. Usually with limited space in the apartments she designs, Alice uses neutral tones with splashes of colors in art pieces or other details, ambient cove lighting, and mirrored walls to open up the area and make every apartment feel more spacious. The way she turns these vacant spaces into warm and inviting homes is a testament of her skill and expertise in design. Combining this and her desire to always inject the personality of her clients into her projects makes Alice Erfe the go-to interior designer for apartment and home dwellers alike.

"My ultimate goal is to guide, direct, and achieve an interior design that will reflect the client's personality"

Top left: Ceramics are showcased as decorative yet functional pieces in the kitchen and dining area.

Top right: Alice keeps bedrooms light and airy using neutral tones with a pop of color on the throw pillows and bed cover.

Left: Alice keeps it playful with a printed bed frame set against light blue and white walls.

Alice Erfe may be contacted via *email* aliceerfe@yahoo.com.

"This house is very close to my heart because aside from the fact that my grandmother built it, we grew up in this place that reflected my mom's funky character—and it was passed on to me," shares interior designer Chat Fores. "I have heard people tell me that the house is full of life, and I intend to pass it on to our children as well."

Photo courtesy of Chat Fores

Chat Fores

Her interior design journey crosses over various design styles and a diverse clientele

Written by **Cy Yambao** | *Photographed by* **Greg Mayo**

A pair of bird sculptures was all it took for Chat Fores to grasp that a love affair with art and design was just waiting to be realized. "I started pottery class with John Pettyjohn in Sining Kamalig at the age of four," shares Chat, who then got interested in making small sculptures in the form of animals. During the same time, her father would host painting sessions in their house every Saturday attended by notable Filipino artists. "Abstract impressionist Glenn Bautista was quite impressed with my pieces that he was willing to trade two of his pastel artworks for my two bird sculptures. I have kept his pieces as a reminder of my early start," she continues.

Thirteen years after launching her own design studio, Chat has become a household name in the industry, taking on residential, commercial, and corporate projects. While fashion remains to be a major influence in her designs, she likewise draws inspiration from art, antiques, emerging concepts, and even

Chat acquired the house right when she was about to put up her own interior design firm, and her father had suggested that she rebuild their own home instead of getting an office in a building. She admits that designing for herself is actually a more gruelling task, as it requires a lot more experimenting and trials-and-errors.

her clients. "I don't stick to one style," says Chat, "but I love to inject drama in my interiors. There has to be a standout piece, color, or design detail. I even like to mix different periods in one setting."

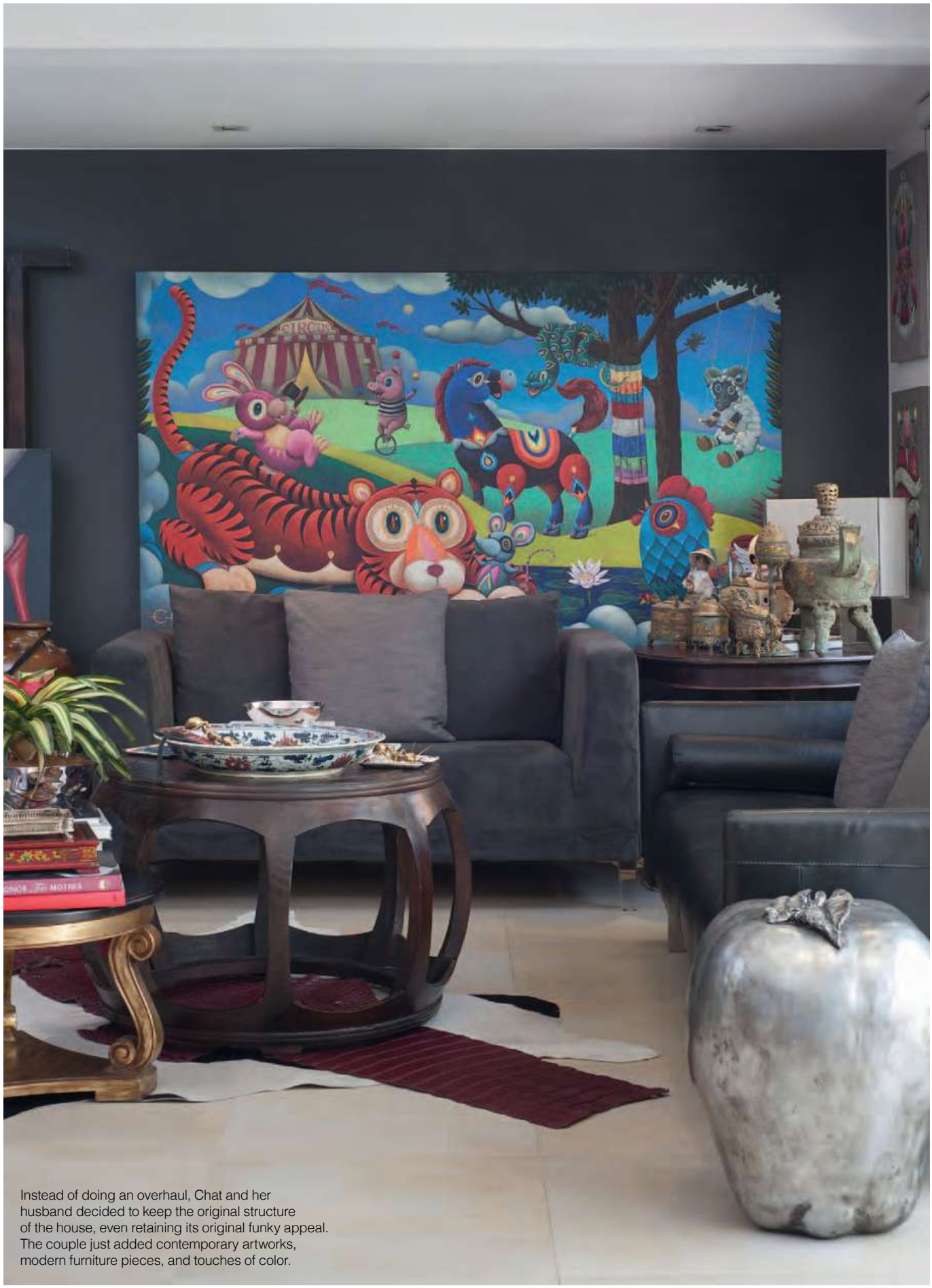
Constant collaboration with a diverse set of clients has influenced Chat to take deeper understanding of every homeowner. "It's wonderful getting to know clients and creating spaces that they will truly appreciate," she says, mentioning that it's a fulfilling process to try out various finishes that would work and to go on shopping sprees that would complete a home. "The most rewarding thing about being an interior designer is being exposed to a lot of beautiful objects, people, and places."

Chat's father loved to collect artworks, so the house's walls have always been lined with pieces by renowned artists like H.R. Ocampo and Ang Kiukok, to name a few.

Chat simply wanted to update the space and give it a more refreshing appeal. "I didn't want to change the mood of the house," she says. "The place has always given my brothers and our friends good vibes while we were all growing up."

"I love to inject drama in my interiors. There has to be a standout piece, color, or design detail. I even like to mix different periods in one setting"

"Lighting plays an important role for this is where I begin," shares Chat, who anchors the look of a space to the main lighting fixture. She then continues to decide on the smaller accents and other design details.



Instead of doing an overhaul, Chat and her husband decided to keep the original structure of the house, even retaining its original funky appeal. The couple just added contemporary artworks, modern furniture pieces, and touches of color.

Budji Layug and Royal Pineda

On breathing life into their vision of the modern Filipino home

Written by **Andrea Portugal** | *Photographed by* **Neal Oshima**

With its down-to-earth contemporary design and overall Filipino aesthetic, the Lumot Lake House is definitively modern Filipino. "The concept of architecture and design is to elevate humanity's way of life," says Architect Royal Pineda. "So if the Lumot Lake House becomes an inspiration for people, it's a very strong message that you do not limit yourself 'just because.'"

The house was inspired by the desire to create a modern Filipino structure that would be relatable to everyone. "In my architecture, I am not limited to the bahay kubo, the *bahay na bato*, or the *bahay Ifugao*," says Royal. "It's a house that I can see for everybody."

"Meaningful design is like wine in that as you patiently process it, its value increases," shares Architect Royal Pineda of BUDJI+ROYAL Architecture+Design. He and his partner, interior Budji Layug, believe that at their core, architecture and design should be a celebration of people and community. "Once you're able to create something good, your work will always give value to you as a creator. It's not the creator that gives value to the work right away," he says.

Budji and Royal's partnership is one built around the concept and practice of collaboration. Their approach to design starts with leaving egos outside the door in order to allow ideas to flourish. "We believe that egos should be absent for ideas to be present," shares Royal. "When the ego is absent, ideas will flow, and you wouldn't mind listening to each other and hearing ideas that are better than yours." It is this philosophy of humility and openness to the ebb and flow of the creative process that infuses soulfulness into their projects. Royal explains, "If you rush into your design, it becomes all about the look (versus the person you're designing for), which can be superficial. Every man will have a different personality, and that personality becomes the main ingredient in our design."

Designer Budji Layug and Architect Royal Pineda

Photo courtesy of BUDJI+ROYAL Architecture+Design

Such is the organic and dynamic design process of the duo. As Royal points out, "Everybody can create a box, but not everyone can create a living architecture. It's very important to put a soul in it."

Below: Given the sloping terrain, the designers grabbed the opportunity to create a stilted house similar to the *bahay kubo* and inspire a sense that the house had "grown" into its environment.

Bottom: Meant as a second home or a weekend getaway, Budji and Royal put a lot of thought into keeping the house low-maintenance. "Another reason why it's called the Lumot Lake House is because with the high humidity, the tendency is that all of your concrete surfaces become moldy," explains Royal. "The whole idea is to let the architecture age and become part of nature, so the exteriors welcome the molds. The cement becomes part of the earth, so it's only the bamboo roof that becomes prominently brown. You don't have to buy paint and re-paint the house."

The house was built right along the rim of the man-made Lumot Lake and is the only house in the area, giving it unobstructed views of the whole vista. "Basically, you see the water, the landscape, and the sky," says Royal. "It's really nice. The property alone is really inspired."

"Everybody can create a box, but not everyone can create a living architecture. It's very important to put a soul in it"

Leo Almeria

Many promising years ahead for the ultimate visionary

Written by **Kyrah Cheng** | *Photographed by* **Zac Moran**

The illusion of the outdoors extends into interior designer Leo Almeria's living room that is well-lit, spacious, and accented with green walls.

The living room pieces reflect Leo's fascination with native textures and locally produced furniture.

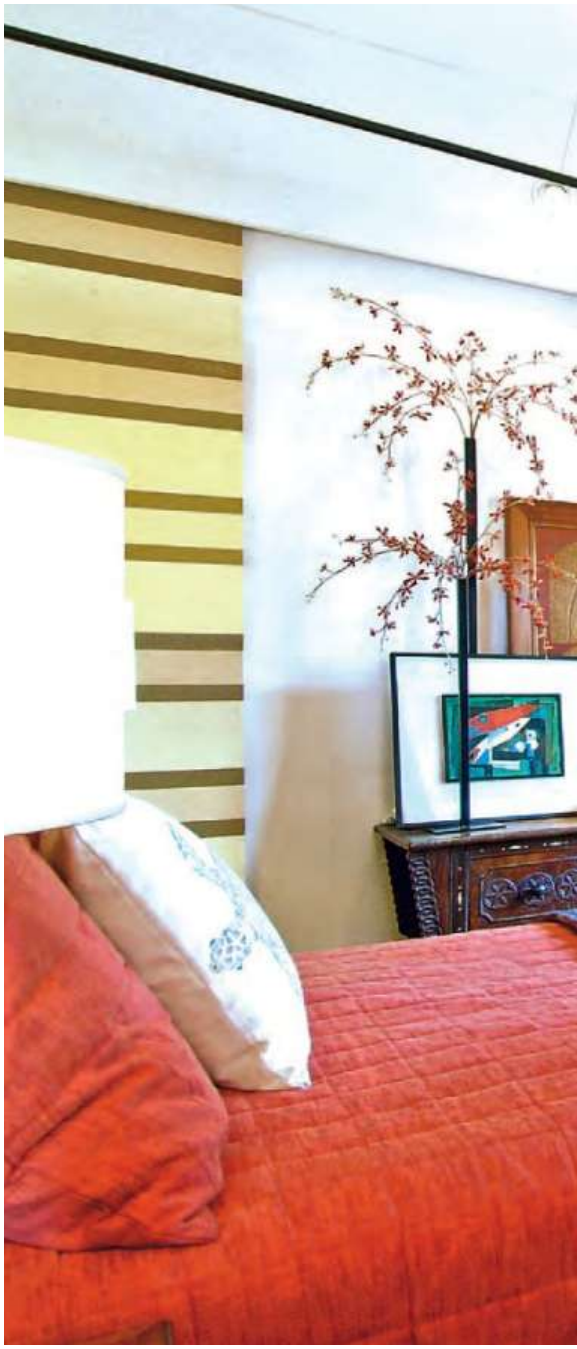
Leo Almeria was drawn to the art of interior design at a very young age. His mother was an avid subscriber of *Better Homes & Gardens* magazine, while his father was skilled in construction and handcrafting toys and simple furniture. "I kept on moving furniture around the house," admits Leo, whose interest in design was also influenced by the parties held in the well-appointed houses of Imelda Marcos in Olot, Leyte. "I was always in awe with the beautiful settings with fresh flowers and performing arts. I would even take note of the costumes, props, lighting, and designs."

One of the county's most renowned interior designers, Leo describes his signature style as simple, appropriate, and functional. He often draws inspiration from nature and the rich Filipino cultural heritage. "My favorite part of the job is when I'm able to satisfy my clients by creating something beautiful for them," he says. "I love hearing people say '*Bagay doon sa nakatira*.'" Leo owes his success to IDr. Edith Oliveros, M.A., FPIID, who taught him a lot about life, especially when it comes to dealing with people and design.

Photo courtesy of Leo Almeria

His advice for aspiring designers who are hoping to follow his footsteps: acquire a good solid foundation. "Work and learn the basic rudiments of the trade by working in a reputable design outfit before embarking on your own," he says. "Travel and read a lot as well. Expose yourself to a lot of ideas that interest you and, most of all, enjoy what you're doing."

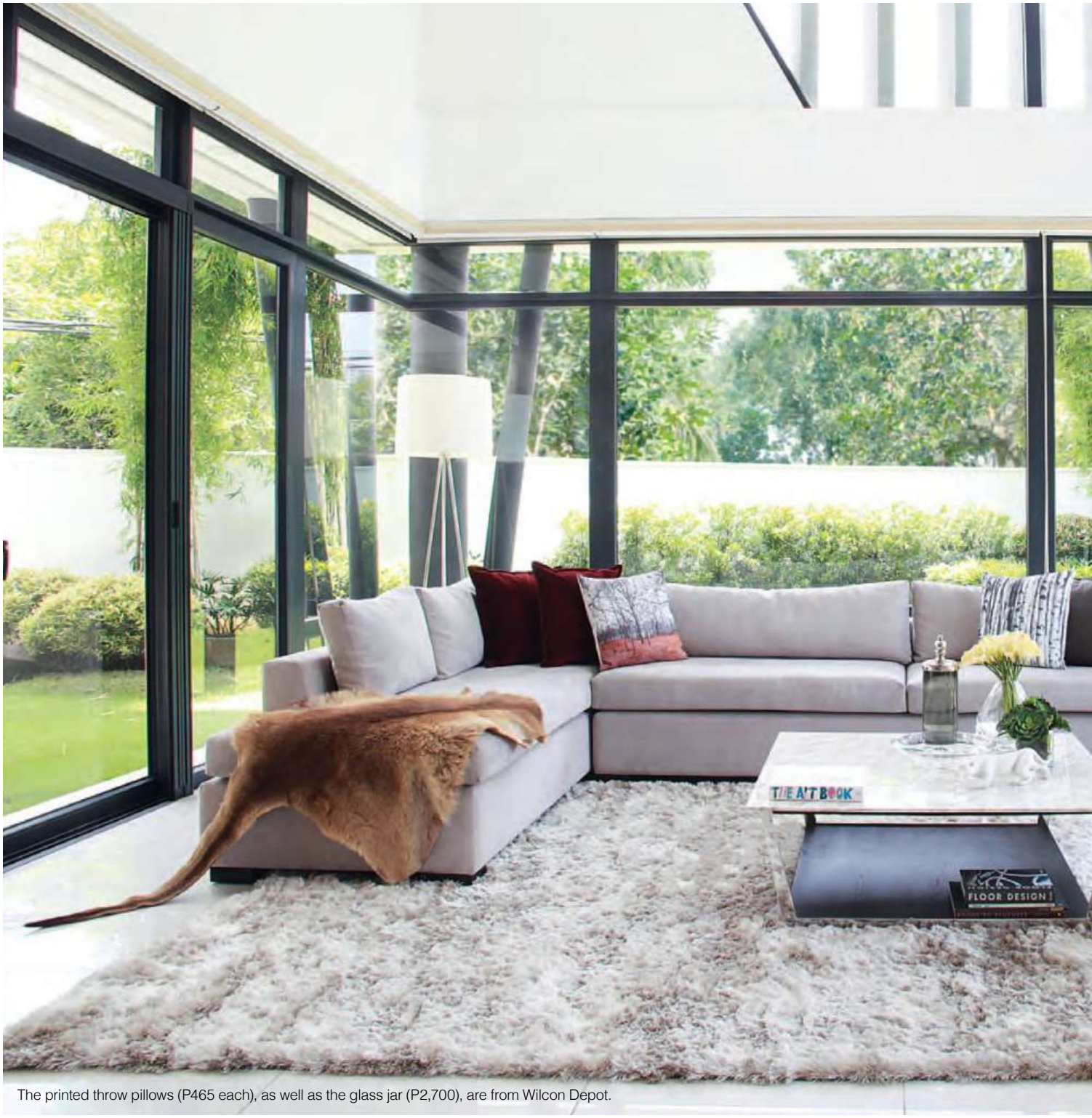
The elegant bathroom fit for a king



During his free time, Leo enjoys listening to classical music, playing the piano, painting, or reading in his home.

The master bedroom strikes the perfect balance between traditional and contemporary.

One of the county's most renowned interior designers, Leo Almeria describes his signature style as simple, appropriate, and functional



The printed throw pillows (P465 each), as well as the glass jar (P2,700), are from Wilcon Depot.

Empire Designs

Opening your eyes to the true meaning of luxury

Written by **Mayte Uyenco** | *Photographed by* **Mark Jacob of Studio 100**

More often than not, what add character to the space are the details. This living room illuminated by natural sunlight allows the muted tones and rich textures to come to life.

Photo courtesy of Empire Designs

(From left) JC Arcega, Vianca Anoñuevo-Favila, and Mark Perez

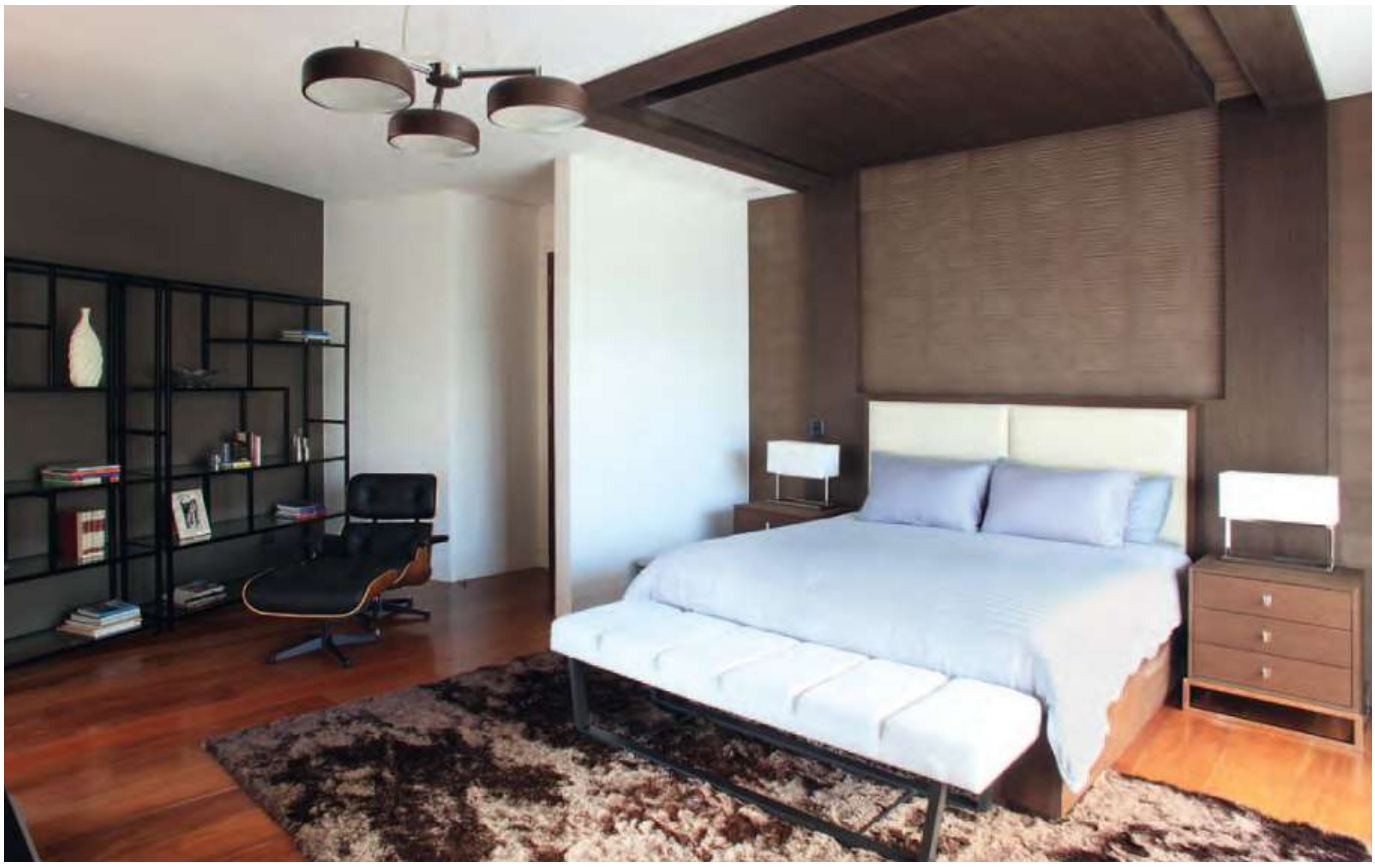
For centuries now, people have believed that things come in threes are bound to bring wonderful luck. Such is the case for interior designers JC Arcega, Vianca Anoñuevo-Favila, and Mark Perez—the three visionaries behind Empire Designs, a firm whose goal is to provide understated luxury in interiors and uplift the spirits of dwellers.

Having crossed paths at the Philippine School of Interior Design, JC, Vianca, and Mark formed a closer bond after discovering their similar background. Their interest in art, as well as their frequent travels with family, drives them to be more passionate about the craft and in turn create inspired designs. The trio is also a firm believer that luxury does not have to cost you much. "Nowadays, luxury is something we can't base on price," says Vianca. "Our company believes that as designers, our true success is when we exceed our clients' expectations and make them happy with the end result."

The strength of Empire Designs comes from their collaborative capabilities and their common design preferences. The process begins with JC conceptualizing on the design and providing an aesthetic direction. Vianca then enhances the concept, adds details, and chooses the finishes. Lastly, Mark brings the whole concept to life as he sources for the most appropriate furniture pieces and accessories. Put together, the ideas of JC, Vianca, and Mark create a lasting impression that allows one to ponder on the true value of a well-designed space that functions as it should.

The 12-seater dining set is balanced out by a minimalist design and an unconventional centerpiece in a warm shade of orange.

"Our company believes that as designers, our true success is when we exceed our clients' expectations and make them happy with the end result"



Different shades of brown in the master bedroom give a restful impression, while a textured rug in the same color palette suggests that it may be a good idea to lay down after a long day in the office.

Left: This bathroom allows one to concentrate on relaxing and enjoying the serenity of a warm bath. **Right:** Bringing in this much light in the bedroom is essential in creating a vibrant and comfortable ambiance.

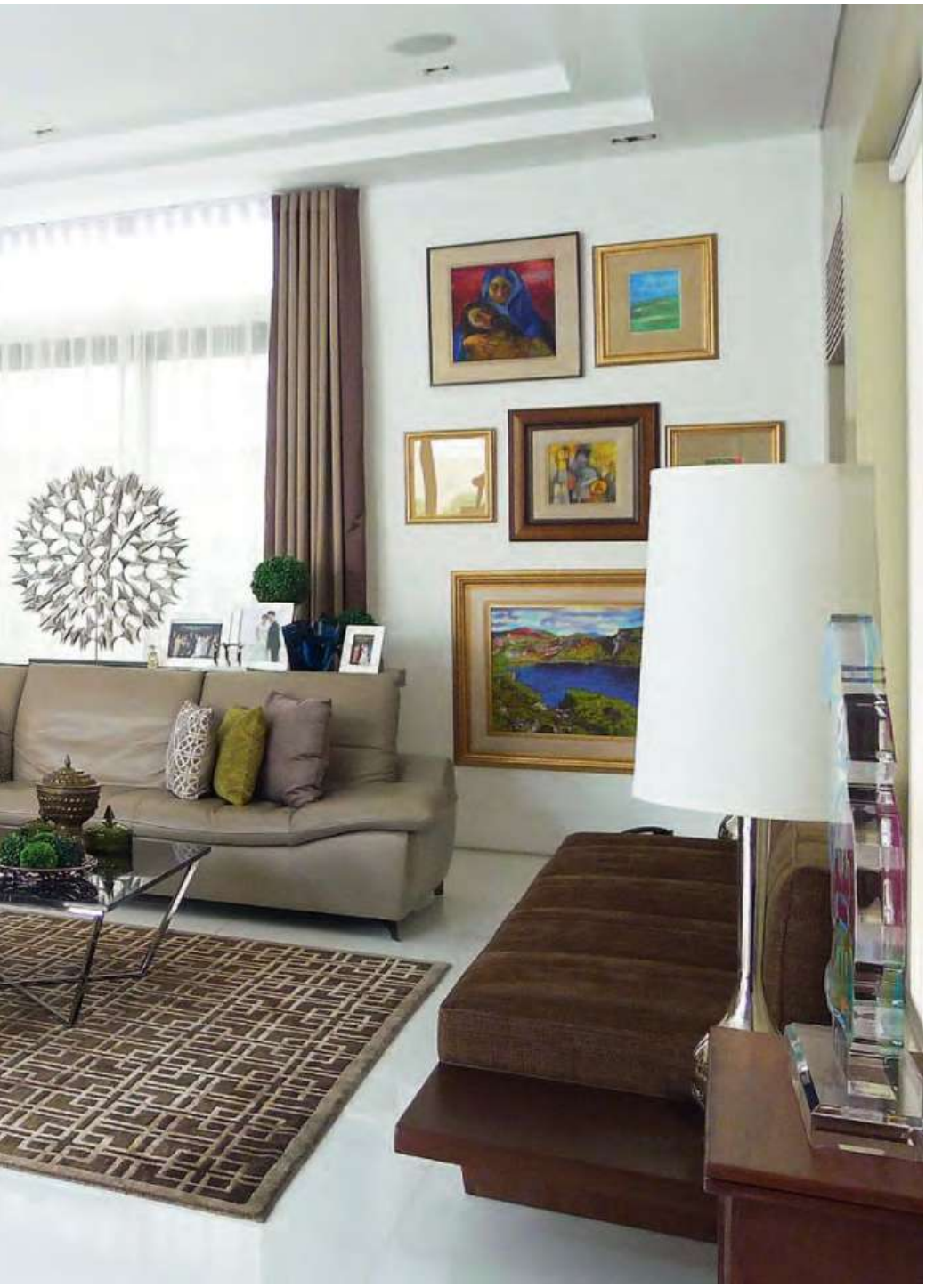
The fluidity of the spaces in this lovely home in Valle Verde showcases Jennie's thought process. Seamless and spacious, the living and dining area coalesced to achieve harmony among all the elements.

Jennie de Dios

Creativity that lasts

Written by **Jasmin Magtown**
Photos courtesy of **Jennie De Dios**

One thing designers crave is the freedom to unleash creativity in their own unique way. For Jennie de Dios, her penchant for creating spaces with a timeless appeal is a liberating experience. Her designs are the perfect response to her clients' wishes, as she interprets their desires in a cohesive and refined way without compromising her exceptional design sensibilities.



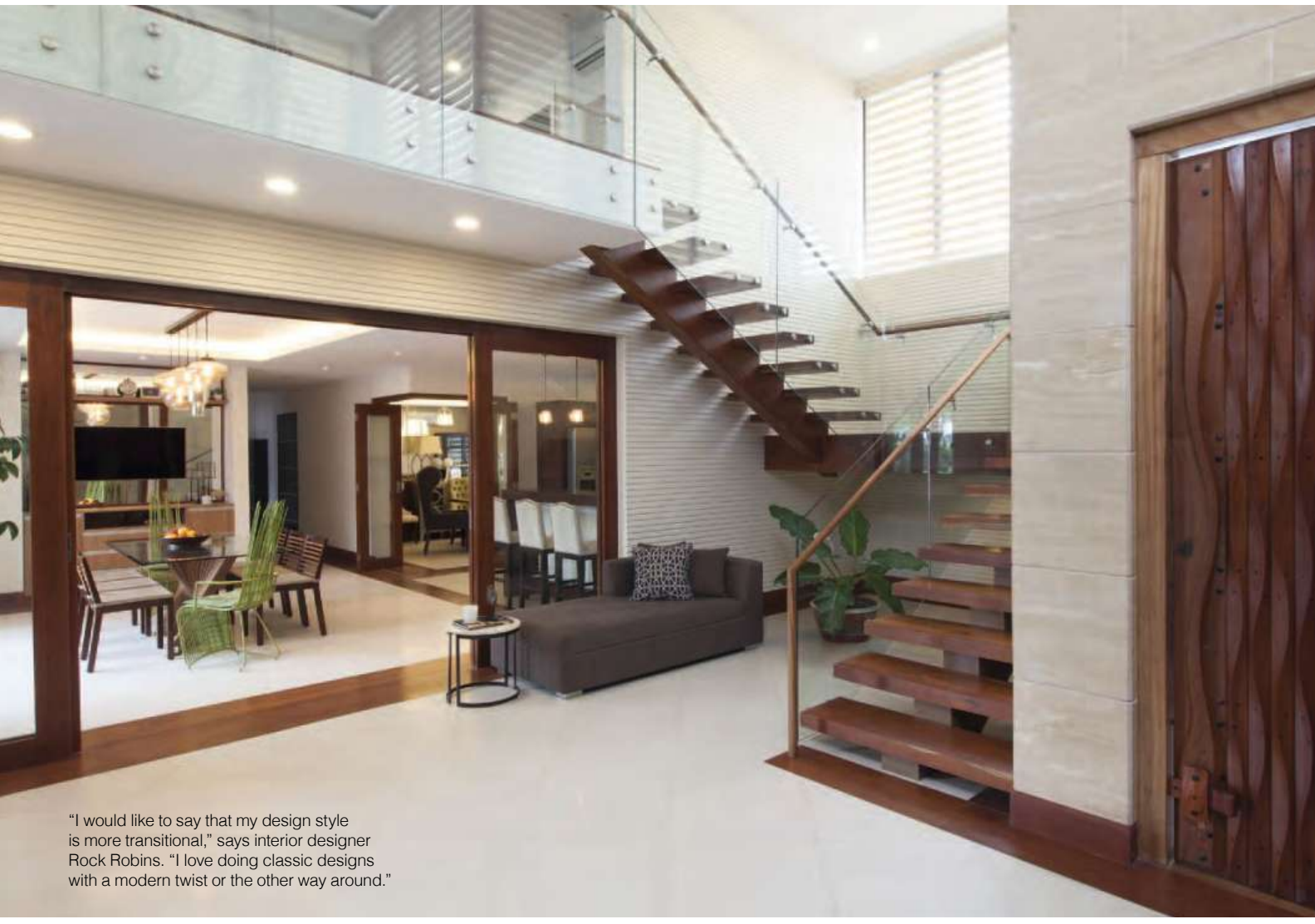
The neutral palette of the modern staircase becomes an excellent frame for the contemporary paintings displayed on the walls.

A unique piece customized by Casa de Dios, the armchair's design echoes the theme of cohesion and comfort predominant in the space.

"I always try to do something that will last," says Jennie. Her technique is to blend every element together to achieve a polished design that can endure ephemeral trends. Possessing an artistic prowess that ripples out to furniture design, Jennie is also fond of customizing original pieces for her clients. Her creations, which make use of only high quality materials, are polished to perfection and reflect imaginative styles. She has mastered the art of crafting unique pieces from her many years of experience in furniture fabrication.

Jennie is an artist armed with business acumen, a perfect combination for success. Her career began to soar when she won her personal battle against cancer and independently founded her interior design firm, Casa de Dios, in 2008. Pursuing interior and furniture design led her to numerous ventures in the field including Prime 101, a furniture showroom turned into a restaurant that she co-established with her current business partners. Her exposure in this line of business opened doors upon doors of opportunities. She mixes interior design, furniture manufacturing, and business in her career exceptionally well. Not one to limit her horizon, she hopes to create her own furniture line very soon.

Casa de Dios Interior Design and Fine Furniture is located at 2/F Ziebart Bldg., 2226 Don Chino Roces Ave., Makati. For inquiries, call (02) 346 1882 or email jenniedediosinc@gmail.com.



"I would like to say that my design style is more transitional," says interior designer Rock Robins. "I love doing classic designs with a modern twist or the other way around."

Photo courtesy of Rock Robins

Rock Robins

Traveling and working on a family business both feed his creative mind

Written by **Kathlyn dela Cruz** | *Photographed by* **Ed Simon of Studio 100**

"I have always been creative, and interior design is the perfect outlet for me," says Rock Robins, as he recalls how he would help source for items for their family business, La Europa Ceramica, which imports tiles from Spain and China, ever since he was a kid. Having proven that he indeed has the knack for creating beautiful spaces, Rock is now among the most sought-after designers in the country. His greatest source of inspiration comes from traveling, but he strives to keep his design style always transitional—classic with a modern twist or vice versa. "I always make it a point that the interiors I design are akin to the design style of the client," stresses Rock. "Never cold, always welcoming."

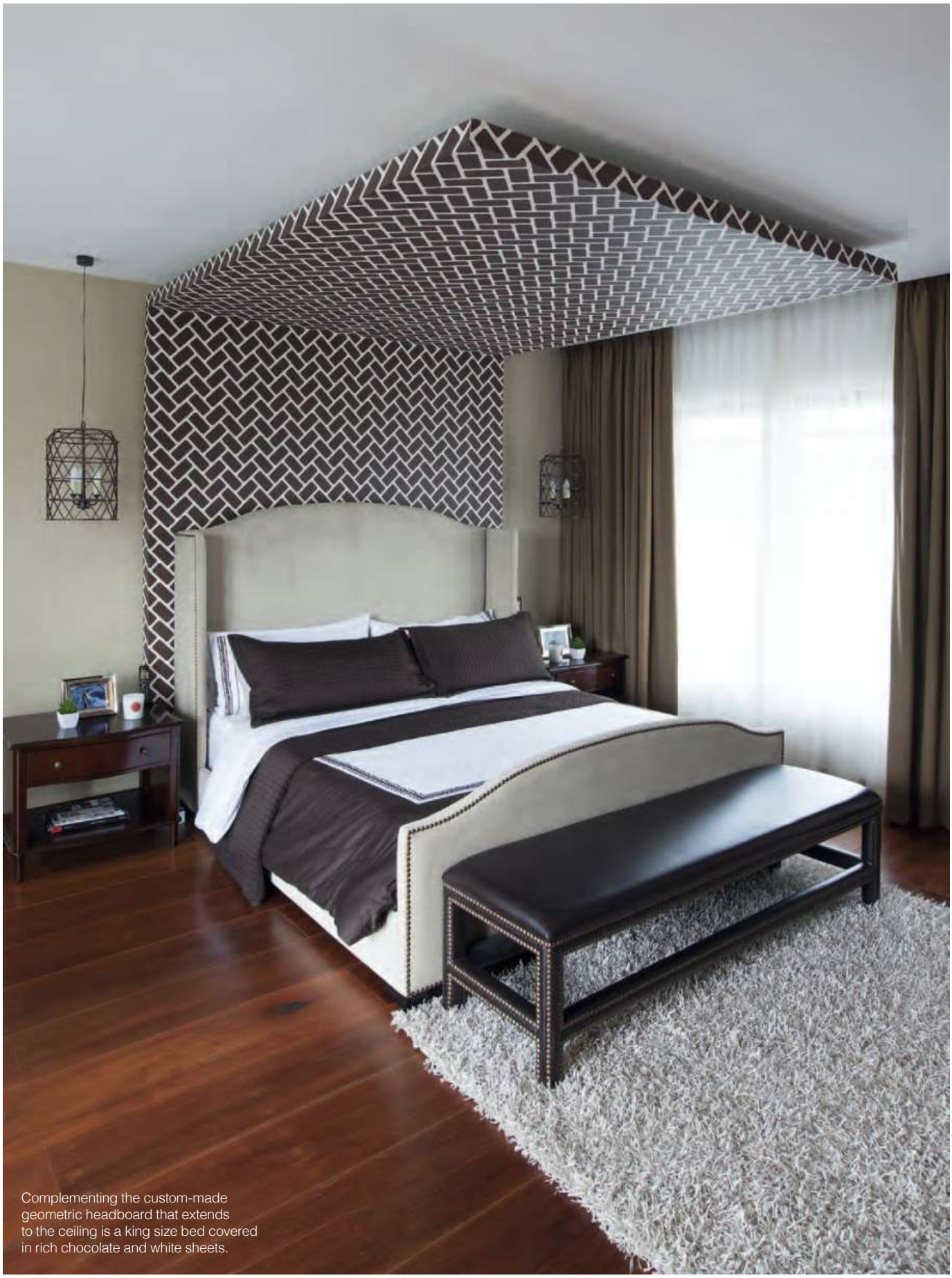
Rock and his family recently launched Robins Design Center, a one-stop showroom where design professionals and enthusiasts can find high-end tiles, furniture, accessories, and services. His dreams, however, do not

Left: Asked to name his favorite residential project, Rock says: "I have a few, but this Pampanga residence turned over on the third quarter of 2014 takes the cake. The client was just a dream to work with."

Above: To further define the home's modern Filipino aesthetic, various artworks of the same style line the walls.

end there. Rock says he aims to expand internationally, in hopes of providing more opportunities for other creative Filipino interior designers like himself.

According to Rock, seeing his clients happy with his work is what keeps him going. "The most rewarding part actually comes during the turnover, when the client sees the whole vision turn into reality and he loves it!" he shares. "But getting to that stage isn't easy. Sometimes, the client is more panicky than usual, but as a designer, you just have to stand your ground and keep the vision clear. They hired you as a professional, after all."



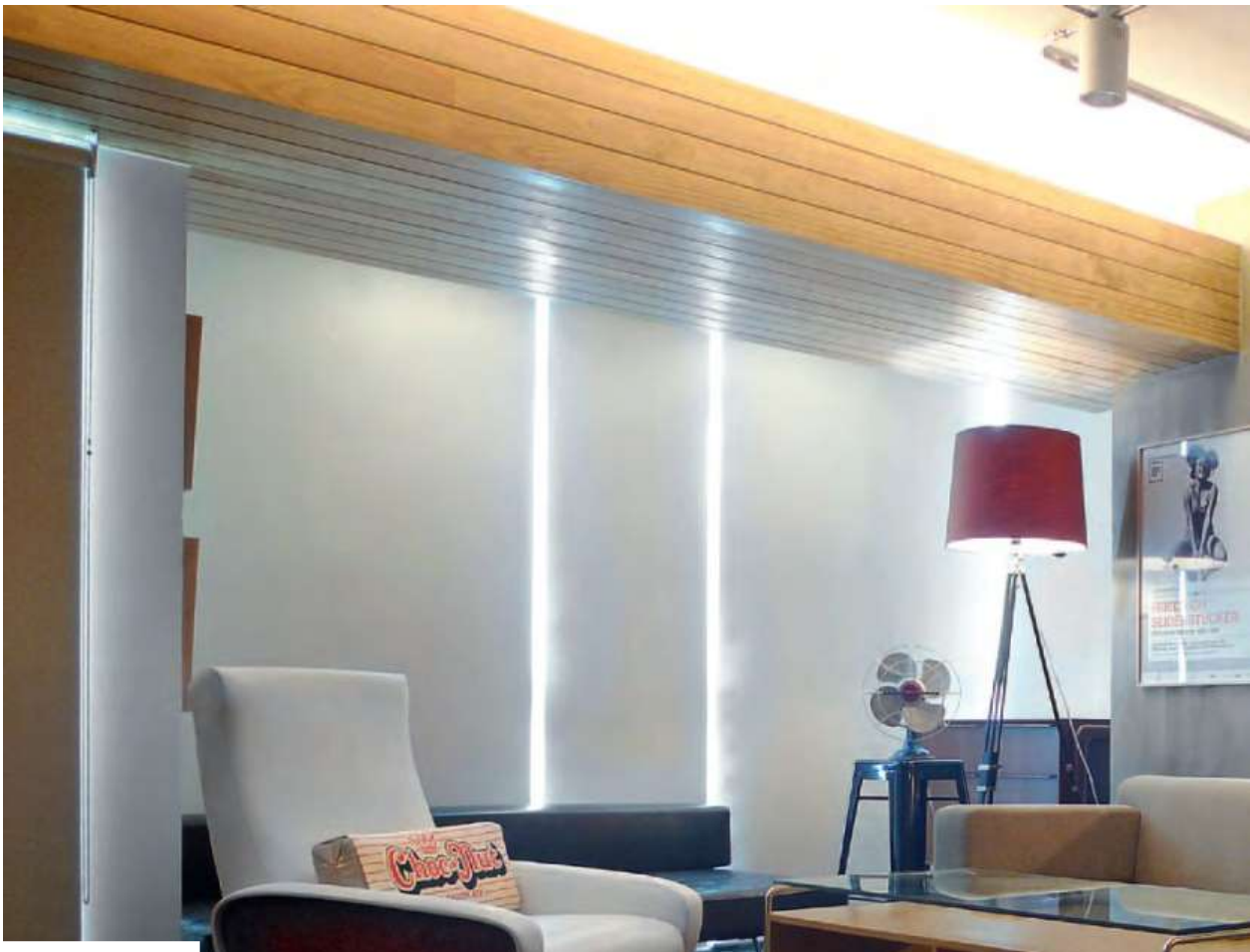
Complementing the custom-made geometric headboard that extends to the ceiling is a king size bed covered in rich chocolate and white sheets.

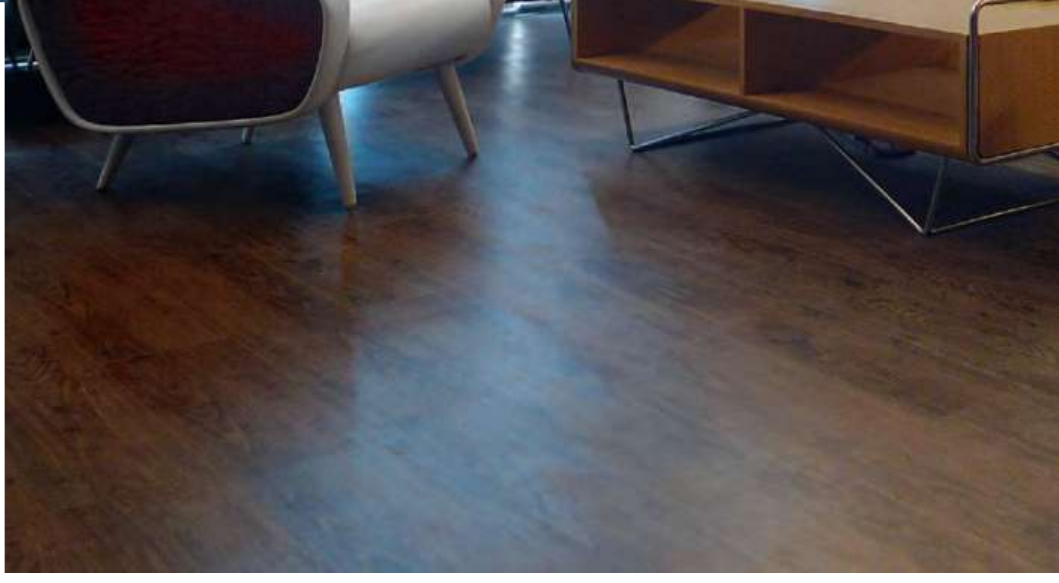
The family's dining area is adorned with Kenneth Cobonpue's iconic designs such as the *Wave* dining set accented by a pair of green *Yoda* chairs.

"The brief they gave me was just to make them feel relaxed every time they get home from a stressful day at the office," shares Rock. "They left everything else to me, so I designed a modern tropical house with an attitude."

"I travel a lot," says Rock, "and this opens my eyes to many new trends and experiences. I take inspiration from the places I visit and adapt them to the Filipino setting."

Interior designer Wilmer Lopez serves up a wide palette of forms and textures in his favorite residential project. "The home shows how flexible industrial and mid-century modern are," he shares. Such overall visual treats show that Wilmer, who started experimenting on the industrial-meets-mid-century style four years ago, has clearly gotten a firm grip on his preferred aesthetic.





Wilmer Lopez

On the life lessons his grandfather has instilled in him

Written by **Andrea Portugal** | *Photos courtesy of* **W. Lopez Designs**

It started with IKEA magazines. Wilmer Lopez's passion for interior design took root at an early age when relatives would bring these glossies home from abroad. "I would try to emulate what I saw," he shares. "I moved furniture around at home, and somehow I knew then that I would grow up doing this professionally."

Above: Understated yet eye-catching pieces greet guests in the foyer. "The client already collects vintage stuff, so accessorizing her place was an extra-rewarding experience," says Wilmer.

Top: On how he feeds his creative spirit, Wilmer shares, "When my schedule allows it, I travel. I think traveling is the best way to cure a creative slump. It opens you up to a whole new world of experiences and sensibilities, and it is sure to fire up one's creativity."

Wilmer established his own design firm, W. Lopez Designs, in 1997 and has since gone on to pave his own path in the industry, becoming known for his unique take on the mid-century modern aesthetic. His lifestyle store, Space Encounters, opened in 2009 and introduced fresh options for old favorites. "I have a deep love for anything vintage—from aesthetics to objects. I like the history they carry, the stories they tell," says Wilmer. "Falling in love with mid-century modern was a natural progression. It marries the form that I love with the functionality and comfort that I've always looked for in furniture design."

One thing that has stuck with Wilmer throughout his entire journey as a designer is a memory of his grandfather making his own furniture. "Nothing ornate, just a simple stool or a bench," he says. "It's the simplicity of the act and the honesty of the dedication to create that I carry with me up to this day. It's a constant reminder that we do this out of love for the work and the people that surround us, be it family or clients. Honesty is important in design; it makes it sincere and transcends trend."

Photographed by Jason Tengco

Frenjick Quesada

An ear for listening and a passion for contemporary eclectic designs

Written by **Mayte Uyenco**
Photographed by **Erik Liongoren and William Ong**

The sunken living room, which incorporates various seating options, is ideal for weekend vacations. Vibrant colors balance out the punches of saturated colors.

Top right: The bold color scheme of the dining area is inspired by the rustic cement tiles that serve as border for the dining table.

Bottom right: Frenjick Quesada played with soft furnishings, woven organic materials, and seashell patterns that resulted in a delicate visual pattern. These elements make the cabana a refreshing break from all the strong colors inside the house.

One aspect that people take for granted with designers is their ability to draw inspiration from clients' tastes. After all, the success of any project depends on how he is able to create a home that conforms to his clients' preferences. Frenjick Quesada learned the value of collaboration when he founded Design HQ with interior designer Hisako Hirayama, from which he learned the importance of working well with a team that puts clients as the top priority.

Before pursuing interior design, Frenjick earned a degree in Business Administration and Accountancy at the University of the Philippines Diliman. His interest in the field started after he had a good time decorating his own place. "I chose a hideous orange for the floor and an avant-garde clown painting. Totally didn't work, but I had so much fun," recounts Frenjick. "My creative friends also showed me how dynamic and inspiring a design-related career can be."

For Frenjick, passion for design, thirst for improvement, and a good ear for listening are the best qualities a designer can have. Throughout his career, he has drawn inspiration from different fields of art and design in order to come up with the best homes, making every empty space a unique representation of his clients' tastes.

An opulent and dramatic bedroom setting was the request of the lady of the house. Frenjick bathed the room in blue-green tones, as it happens to be her favorite color.

The bathroom was designed to be a tranquil abyss. Its basic and delicate color scheme provides contrast to the rest of the home.

The wood carvings and rustic textures in the powder room take inspiration from the owners' trip to Bali, which likewise became the overall theme of their vacation home.

The children's room is a marriage of distressed finishes and colored accent carvings that both suggest a playful vibe.

The V House, as Astrid calls it, is one of the most memorable residential projects she's done with Architect Chris Bello. "Most of the clients we've worked with usually gravitate towards modern contemporary style, so it's quite rare for us to meet people who are open to having Mediterranean-inspired interiors," says Astrid.

Photo courtesy of Astrid Sangil

Astrid Sangil

This once self-doubting interior designer is now making a mark in the industry

Written by **Cy Yambao** | *Photographed by* **Greg Mayo**

Astrid Sangil's journey to interior design is comparable to a butterfly learning to spread its wings or a flower gracefully blossoming. It is one that required enough courage to take a risk, get out of her comfort zone, and finally live the dream. "Instead of taking a course that was related to the creative field, I took up Engineering, which is traditionally considered as a good profession to pursue," shares Astrid, who, by her junior year, decided to follow her gut and transfer to a course she knew she would enjoy. "Interior design felt like a good fit because it fell between the creative and technical aspects."

But what really jumpstarted Astrid's career is the Metrobank Art and Design Excellence competition, in which she won the grand prize for the interior design category in 2013. "Prior to joining, I was someone who was content on staying in the shadows because of my fear of failure, criticism, and judgement," she says. Little did she know that this recognition would give her the opportunity of meeting industry professionals and artists, whom she could draw inspiration from. "Being part of such a prestigious competition proved that taking risks to pursue the life and career you want, despite the challenges that may come with it, will eventually be rewarding," continues Astrid.

Just last year, Astrid joined forces with her partner, Architect Chris Bello, to launch their design firm, Pbell Architects + Astrid Interior Designs. While they have personal preferences in design, the duo adapts and evolves according to their clients' demands, so that each project they take on becomes a reflection of the people living in it. "I hope the work that we do at Pbell + A.ID," says Astrid, "can help people appreciate the value of our profession and understand that our field exists not just for the provision of beautiful spaces, but also for the enhancement of everyday lives."

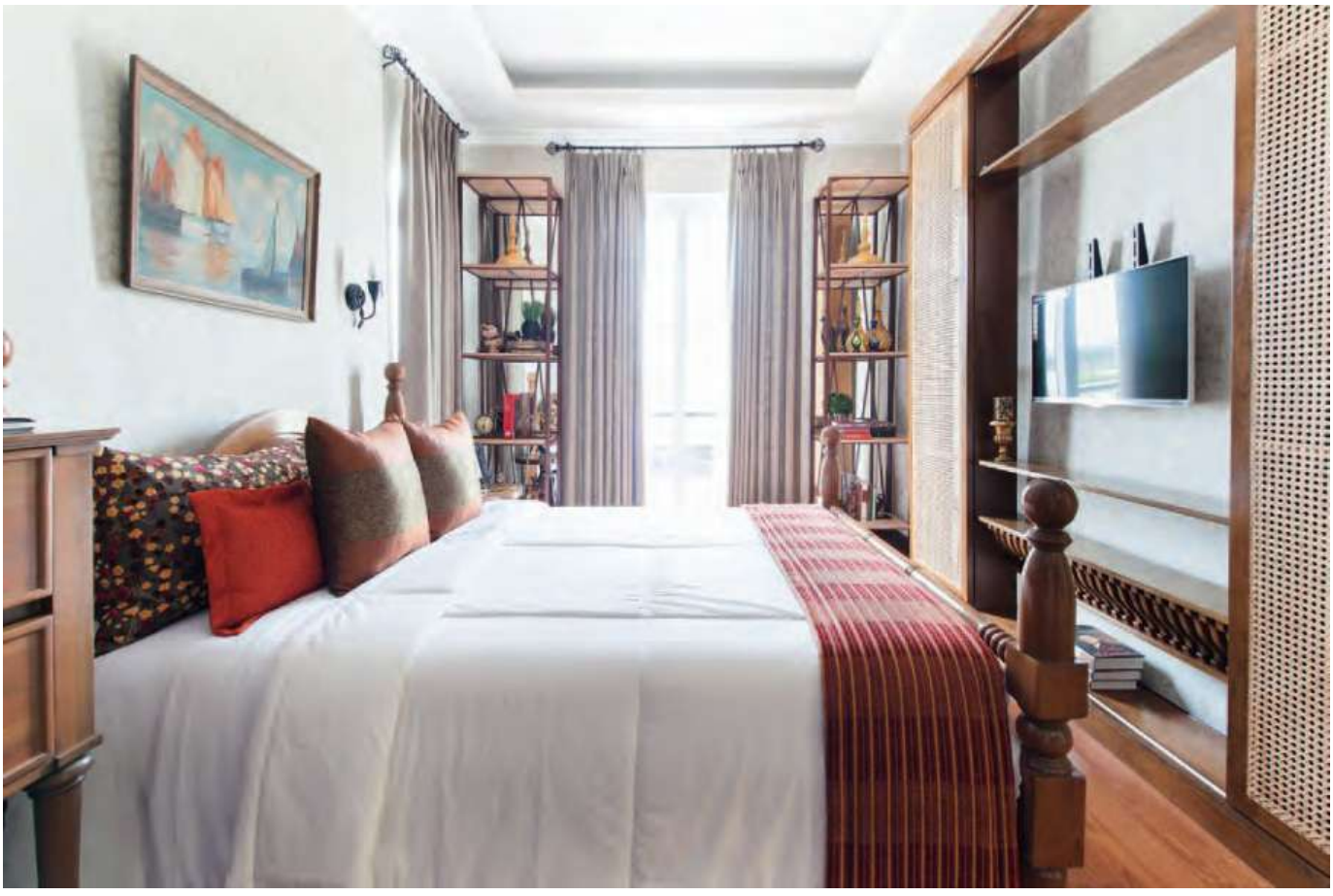
"We really had fun while designing the house, as we were able to experiment with various materials like the terrazzo accent flooring in the living area, the *faux* finish of the high accent wall, and the custom cement tiles on the stair risers," explains Astrid.

Contrary to most of their residential projects, it is in the V House that Astrid and Chris were able to freely optimize combinations of colors, patterns, and textures.

"If I were to design a space for myself, my preferred look would be homey, dainty, bright, and airy. I like spaces that feel fresh and relaxing, but are made interesting through a careful mix of materials," shares Astrid.

"Interior design felt like a good fit because it fell between the creative and technical aspects"

While it took more effort and time for Astrid and Chris to collaborate in previous projects, they have already learned how to best work with each other when the V House came along. "I think the secret to efficiently working with a partner is acknowledging each other's strengths and weaknesses," says Astrid.



The most challenging part of the entire project is that they were given only a day to furnish the interiors. “We gave it everything,” says Astrid, “because we want to make our clients happy by meeting the desired timetable.”

“Seeing the smile on my clients’ faces is the best thing about being an interior designer because our business is based on service,” says Astrid. “It is about fostering good working relationships with them.”

FTADesign

Bringing homes a touch of contemporary eclectic style

Written by **Toni Medina** | *Photographed by* **Greg Mayo**

FTADesign's signature style of contemporary eclectic interiors is defined by layers of patterns, variation of textures, combination of bold antiques and modern furniture, and contrast of lacquered and brass finishes in this living area.

A striking black-and-white floor pattern and a touch of antique brass in this beautiful foyer bring a sense of vitality and richness.

Established in 2008, FTADesign is an interior design firm that creates posh spaces for restaurants, boutiques, bars, and private homes. It is slowly becoming known for its fresh and global approach to design, with its distinct contemporary eclectic style, and fondness for bold patterns and prints that are never overwhelming.

FTADesign's unmistakable and refined look is a clear reflection of its principal designer, Nix Alañon. "I always aim for timeless interiors, but I make sure to keep the client's personality in mind," he says. "I love contrasts: mixing the old and the new, combining raw with refined materials." With Nix's impeccable taste and good eye for design, he brings in an eminent characteristic in all his projects, drawing inspiration from his travels but making the designs his own.

When Nix can't find what he wants, he makes it. This encouraged him to launch his furniture line, Phoenix Home, in 2012. The modest furniture showroom is known for its made-to-order pieces for clients who seek custom designs at reasonable prices. Such partnership established FTADesign as a one-stop shop for homeowners looking to have their dwellings designed and furnished with exceptional furniture pieces. With a lot of accolades under his belt, what's next for Nix? We have yet to find out, but he is one individual who continues to excite and influence us.

Left: The pool area is covered with trellis, smooth limestone flooring, and lounge furniture pieces.

Right: Striking fixtures and accent pieces like high shine cabinetry, marble countertop, patterned flooring, and Phoenix Home's metal-framed barstools in velvet fabric make this kitchen worth looking at.

"I love contrasts: mixing the old and the new, combining raw with refined materials"

Above: Antique white walls, layers of patterns, and a canopy chair by Phoenix Home cast an element of drama in the master walk-in closet.

Left: Nothing conveys a sophisticated bedroom than an upholstered and tufted headboard, sofa and bed bench with curved backs and feminine lines, a gold-gilded console, a geometric area rug, and a crystal table lamp.

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BEST *of the* BEST

Interior design is a field that doesn't stand on its own. It spans across several other forms of art that, in more ways than one, make the world a pleasurable environment to live in. As we celebrate our crystal year this month, we find it rightful to recognize 15 of the industry's best, whose expertise in their respective fields has elevated Filipino artisanship to a global scale. From furniture design to home retail to contemporary arts, our roster of game changers epitomizes originality and innovation.

"My parents have been in the furniture business for about 27 years," says Vito Selma. "I grew up with the factory as my playground, so it was only natural for me to get into furniture design as well."

FURNITURE DESIGN

VITO SELMA

A natural passion for design

Written by **Kitkat Torres**
Photos courtesy of **Vito Selma**

It begins with identifying the raw quality of a material and evolving it into a highly elevated form. Through Vito Selma's hands, the material bends, flows, and transforms into unexpected shapes and curves that are as functional as they are beautiful.

Exposed at an early age to the family's furniture business, the award-winning designer has become one of the youngest Filipinos to draw the world's attention to Cebu. Vito's style finds a healthy balance of innovation and tradition, as it is constantly evolving but remains grounded in the material he knows best—wood. In fact, he no longer sees the timber as just a medium, but a partner that contributes to the whole design process. Highlighting its naked grain and texture, Vito combines a contemporary aesthetic to create furniture pieces that are simple yet very compelling. One of his most noted and earliest pieces is the *Geo* table, which shows an intricate weave of wood, capturing Vito's affinity for geometry and careful calculation.

Having been involved in different aspects of furniture design since 2006, Vito started as the Creative Director for Stonesets International Inc. before becoming its Head Design Director, and ultimately, deciding to create his own, independent Vito Selma brand. Vito bears a master's degree in Industrial Design from the Scuola Politecnica di Design in Milan, Italy, and he also acknowledges much of his success to such notable mentors as Debbie Palao, George de Haast, Raffaella Mangiarotti, the Campana Brothers, and Cul De Sac.

The *Allegra* chair is both fun and contemporary, with a sleek wooden frame and a cradle of woven fibers cocooning you inside.

Part of the *Arata* collection, this seating piece is a careful union of repeating wooden forms that create a seamless, contralateral figure.

Brightening up the room, the *Bongo* lamp uses fine lines to form and represent the pulsing beats of a drum.

The *Paisley* chair and *Geo* table show off Vito's fluid, clean aesthetic. The seating piece is representative of easy, flowing fabric, while the table ties together a seamless precision.

The *Geo* chair is a dynamic play on lines, illustrating the possibility of movement through fine wooden pieces fanning out into the silhouette.

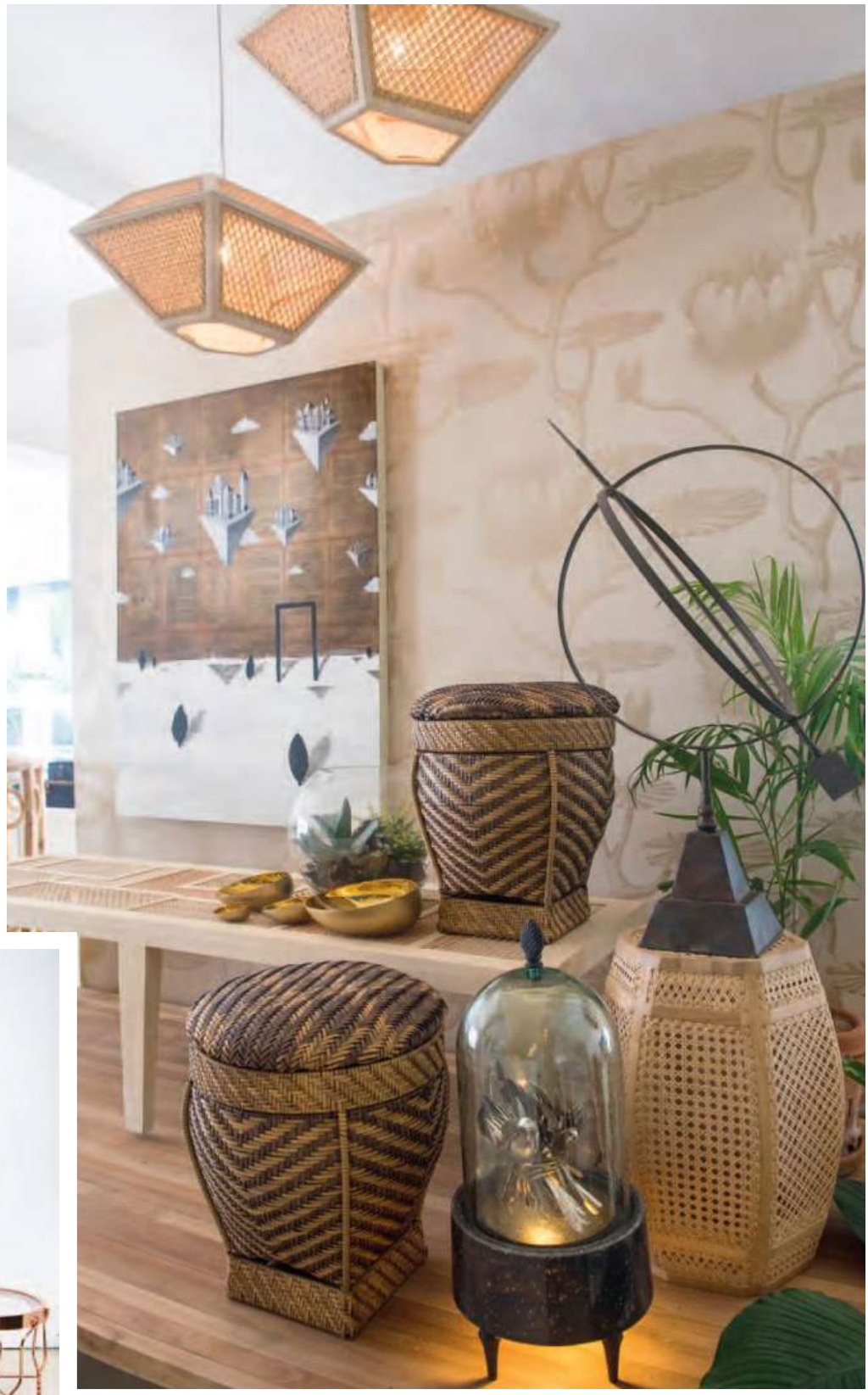
Vito combines a contemporary aesthetic to create furniture pieces that are simple yet very compelling

HOME RETAIL

KISH

Stories from across the globe are retold in this home furnishings store

Written by **Andrea Portugal**
Photos courtesy of **KISH**



Left: Furniture designer and design consultant Ito Kish with chairs from his *B-luxe* Collection. "My venturing into furniture design and where it is now after less than four years is pure luck and lots of work," he says. "I never imagined it would get the recognition that it has gotten."
Right: On display in KISH are pieces from Ito's own collections, as well as pieces curated from his travels, showing the designer's penchant for putting a refreshingly modern spin on classic favorites.

The Real Beauty of
MARIWASA Full HD
Hi-precision design
Picture-perfect colors
Well-defined textures
Random print pattern
STANWOOD Ivory 30 x 60 cm
VERA Ivory 30 x 60 cm
THE REAL DIGITAL TILES
MARIWASA
FULL HD
AVAILABLE IN ALL LEADING HOME DEPOTS AND TILE SHOPS NATIONWIDE
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"I am a storyteller of profound imagination," says Ito, describing the work he does as Chief Visual Storyteller of KISH.

The *Josefina* chaise lounge pays homage to Filipino fashion designer Josie Natori. Ito's designs are visual representations of his pride in his roots and heritage. "World domination would be nice," he laughs, in answer to where he's headed as a designer. "But I would be ecstatic if Filipino furniture was out there for the world to recognize."

The opening of KISH back in December 2000 would be one of the highlights of Ito's career. "It was the start of everything, of what KISH is today, and of a new chapter in my life," he shares.

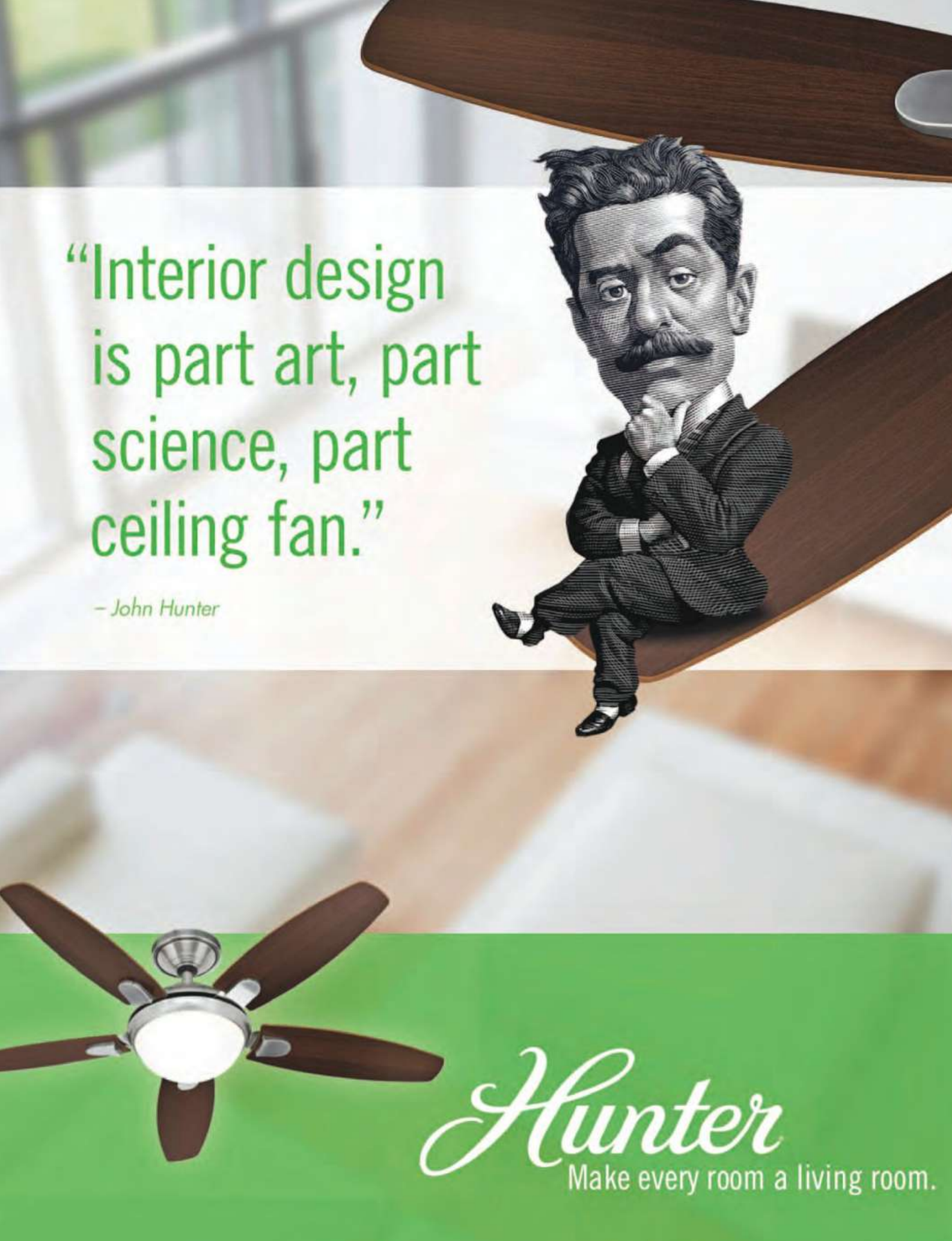
"To inspire and change the way people live." This is the vision that has driven KISH as a brand since it opened its doors 15 years ago with designer Ito Kish at the helm. "When I was young, I decided to buy plaid gift wrapping papers to wallpaper our small house in San Pablo," he shares. "After seeing the results, I knew I'd have a beautiful store where people could go and get exceptional ideas that would change the way they live." And put up a store is just what he did. KISH has become a go-to brand for unique and storied home furniture and accessories that build on the character of any given space.

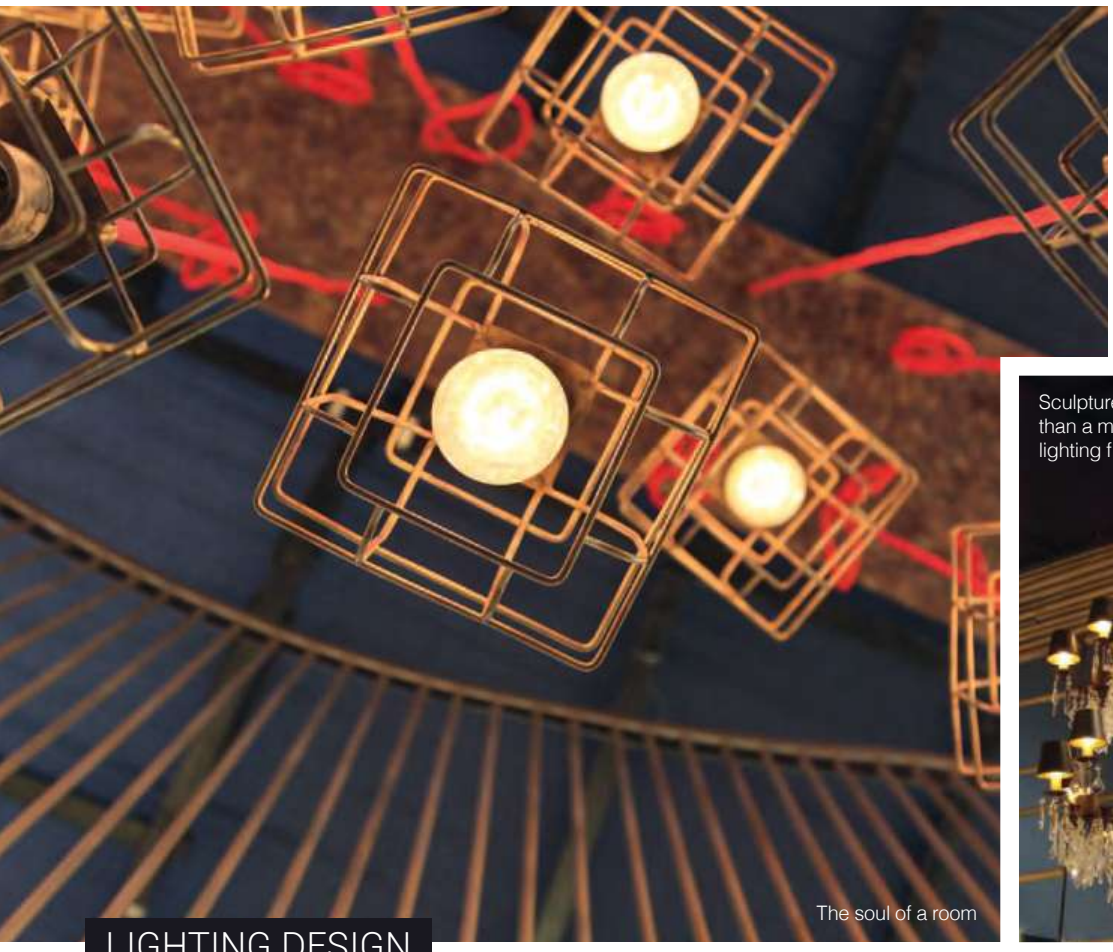
As Chief Visual Storyteller of KISH, Ito likens his work to creating little stories through his pieces. "There is no process for me," he says. "I travel around and pick things because of how I look at them and the stories I see in them. I change the look of the store about three times a year as a way of evolving."

Ito describes himself as a constant dreamer who sets his objectives deliberately and intentionally. "I remember telling a friend that I wanted to design furniture inspired by who I am as a Filipino," he shares. Ito's first furniture collection, the Baluster, debuted at Manila FAME three years later to rave reviews. On what's next, he says, "We are introducing two new home store brands this year and we are very much excited for the reveal."

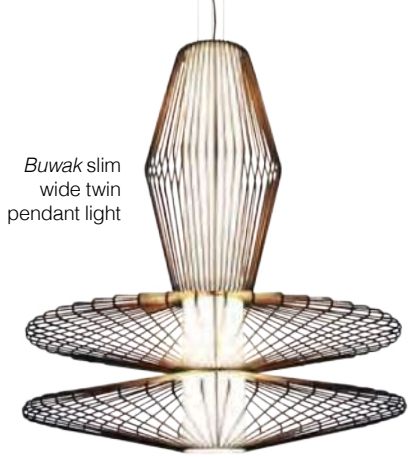
The *Gregoria* lounge named after Ito's mother was the first piece he designed and is part of the *Baluster* Collection. The piece, celebrated for its craftsmanship and innovative take on the classic baluster, earned Ito his first Katha Award as well.

Starting this month, the second floor of KISH will become the ITO KISH showroom, which is the new home of his very own furniture designs. **KISH** is located at 233 N. Garcia St., Bel-Air, Makati. For inquiries, call (02) 896 8366 or visit kish.ph.


"Interior design is part art, part science, part ceiling fan."
– John Hunter
Hunter
Make every room a living room.



The soul of a room



Buwak slim wide twin pendant light

Sculpture more than a mere lighting fixture

LIGHTING DESIGN

AZCOR

Leading the way in light

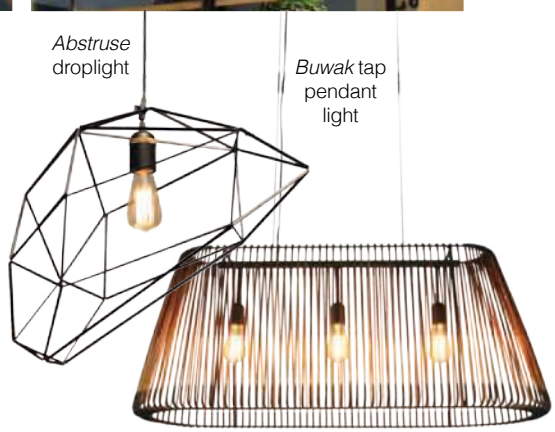
Written by **Zachary Lim** | *Photos courtesy of* **Azcor**

In 34 years, Azcor has risen from a meager one man, one garage to a multinational award-winning designer. With a firm commitment to quality and design, they have established themselves as leaders in lighting design in the country. They have provided designs for clients from Belgium, Italy, Spain, Greece, Japan, and many others, making them the perfect testament to the skill and level of commitment of their entirely Filipino workshop.

In Azcor's designs, the challenge is constant. They perpetually strive to push people's notion of lighting and its functions, as well as challenge their own skills as designers. This philosophy of continuous improvement has rightfully cemented Azcor at the helm of lighting design in the Philippines. To this day, Azcor delivers designs varying from warm and intimate to modern and contemporary, which shows the diversity of their skills and taste.

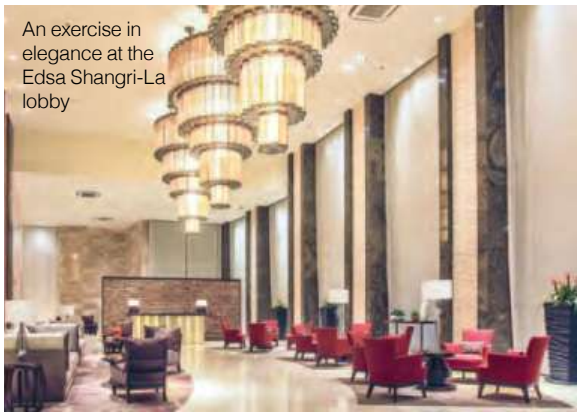
Azcor approaches lighting design with a simple yet powerful sentiment: lighting allows design to reach out, and create a near tangible moment, experience, or memory that helps bring concepts to reality. Lighting breathes life into interiors, allowing them to establish a presence unique and becoming of the design.

Whether a traditional piece inspired by heritage or a contemporary design exploring the boundaries of materials, Azcor has proven time and time again that lighting is essential in defining an interior's presence. After more than three decades of commitment to their philosophy and craft, their contribution to lighting and design is undeniable. Azcor has devoted their craft to bringing new light to the industry.



Abstruse droplight

Buwak tap pendant light



An exercise in elegance at the Edsa Shangri-La lobby

CONDO FIT FURNITURE
Livingroom|Bedroom|Dining

Sachi Queen Bed - Php 17,995.00
- Padded grade A P/U / Leatherette material / 60 X 75 CM

Scarlette L - Php 29,995.00
- Shape reversible fabric sofa

SEDIE - Php 5,995.00
- Sofa Console Table
- L80 X D36 X H74.5 CM
- Color: Walnut

DAY BED SHOBE - Php 17,995.00
- Inner Size: 990 x 1900 mm
- Cushion: (Linen dark brown) / (PU Rama dark brown)
- Color: Cappuccino / Rubber wood / Malaysia

SEDIE - Php 6,995.00
- Center Table
- L110 X W55 X H50 CM
- Color: Walnut

SEDIE Dining Set 6's - Php 39,995.00
- Table: L150X W90 X H75 cm
- Chair: L48.5 X D58 X H82.5 CM
- Color: WALNUT

SEDIE - Php 4,995.00
- End Table
- L55X W55 X H60 CM
- Color: Walnut

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Villa Marina, located in Sta. Elena, Laguna, was nominated in the Villas category by the World Architecture Festival (WAF) in 2014. It allowed Miñana the opportunity to work with wonderful clients like Rico and Nena Tantoco. "There was alchemy, a merging of our sensibilities," he says. "Villa Marina is a celebration and distillation of our joint vision to celebrate the richness of our culture, as well as to highlight the beauty of the Sta. Elena Golf and Country Estate where the residence is located."

CONTEMPORARY PHILIPPINE ARCHITECTURE

MANNY MIÑANA

Creates spaces for the well-being and serenity of people

Written by **Miguel R. Llona** | *Photographed by* **Ed Simon of Studio 100**

"Architecture must feel comfortable because it is where the spirit resides," says Manny Miñana. It's unusual to hear an architect talk about his work in such a poetic way, but for Miñana, it encapsulates how closely tied his nature is to his architecture.

To know Miñana, one has to understand his approach to design. In his three decades of practice, his creative intuition has always told him that what is most important is a space that brings about well-being. He also confesses to a deep affection for Filipino culture, and celebrates it in his architecture. But instead of preoccupying himself with the literal or decorative translations of what is Filipino, Miñana is drawn to extracting familiar forms from our vernacular architecture and recreating contemporary spaces of simplicity, context, elegance, and comfort. Through the language of light, energy, context, technology, and materiality, Miñana creates peaceful and harmonious environments that capture the soul of its users.

Photographed by Denise Weldon

Manny Miñana on why he became an architect: "I was always fascinated by the idea that you could create spaces that delight, surprise, and heal, so I was drawn to the energy of space and what it could do."

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shut off and turn into a fan after 4 hours!

This made me save quite a lot.
So every month's end,
I find myself thinking...
In a year's time, where will
I spend my savings best.

Will it be for that Bali trip
I've been planning for?

Will it be for a one-time
big time shopping-spree?

Will it be for my DREAM WEDDING?
No, my boyfriend will take care of that.

Hmm... I spent days thinking
about where to spend my aircon savings.

And then it hit me.
It will be my MOM'S AND DAD'S
30TH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY next year.
It will be nice to give them
a really, really nice gift.

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Friday night.
Work's over.
And my girlfriends are set
to drink til dawn.
In my flat.
They take the liberty of loading
my ref with beer.
I fill the ice-maker with water.
No spills in the ref.

But out in the patio,
everyone is recklessly spilling
their secret loves and
most hated men.

The girls are marching back and forth
to the beverage center of the ref,
wanting to revive every story with
a fresh bottle of beer.

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It has the features of a side-by-side. With a Smart Station for quick access to beverages and a spill-proof ice maker with a removable water tank filling system.

My sister and her hubby,
off they went on a holiday.
And I, the good sister,
was tasked to care for their kids.
ALL THREE OF THEM.
Their nanny came along.
But still. For two weeks!

I was their mom and their dad.
I drove them to school.
I fixed their meals.
Helped them with homework.

And then at the end of week one,
Gasp! A mountain of clothes!
Pajamas, school uniforms,
and everything else.

So, I shoved 'em all
inside my laundry center.
Almost 15kg of kiddie clothes.
Spin. Spin. Spin.
Then I moved them into the dryer.
Yes, all of them at once.
Not even one piece of clothing
left waiting.

Whew! No more batch two.
Just a simple chore I gladly did
for my sweet little nieces.

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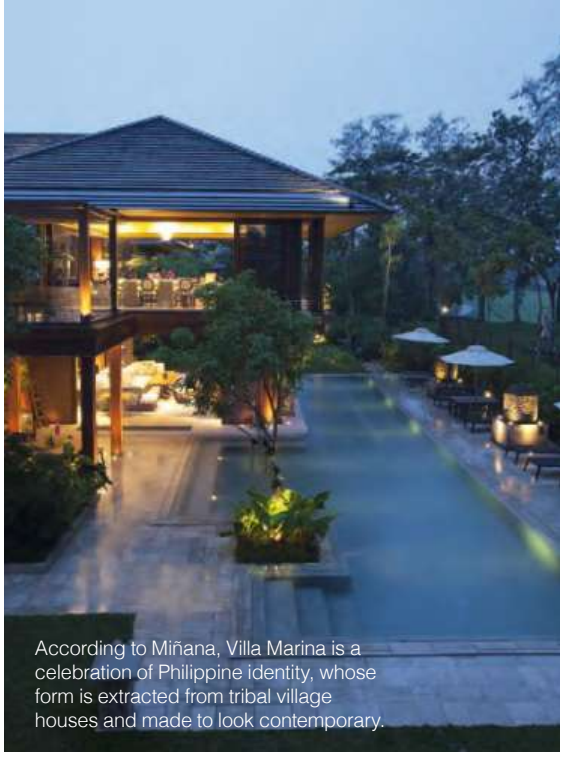
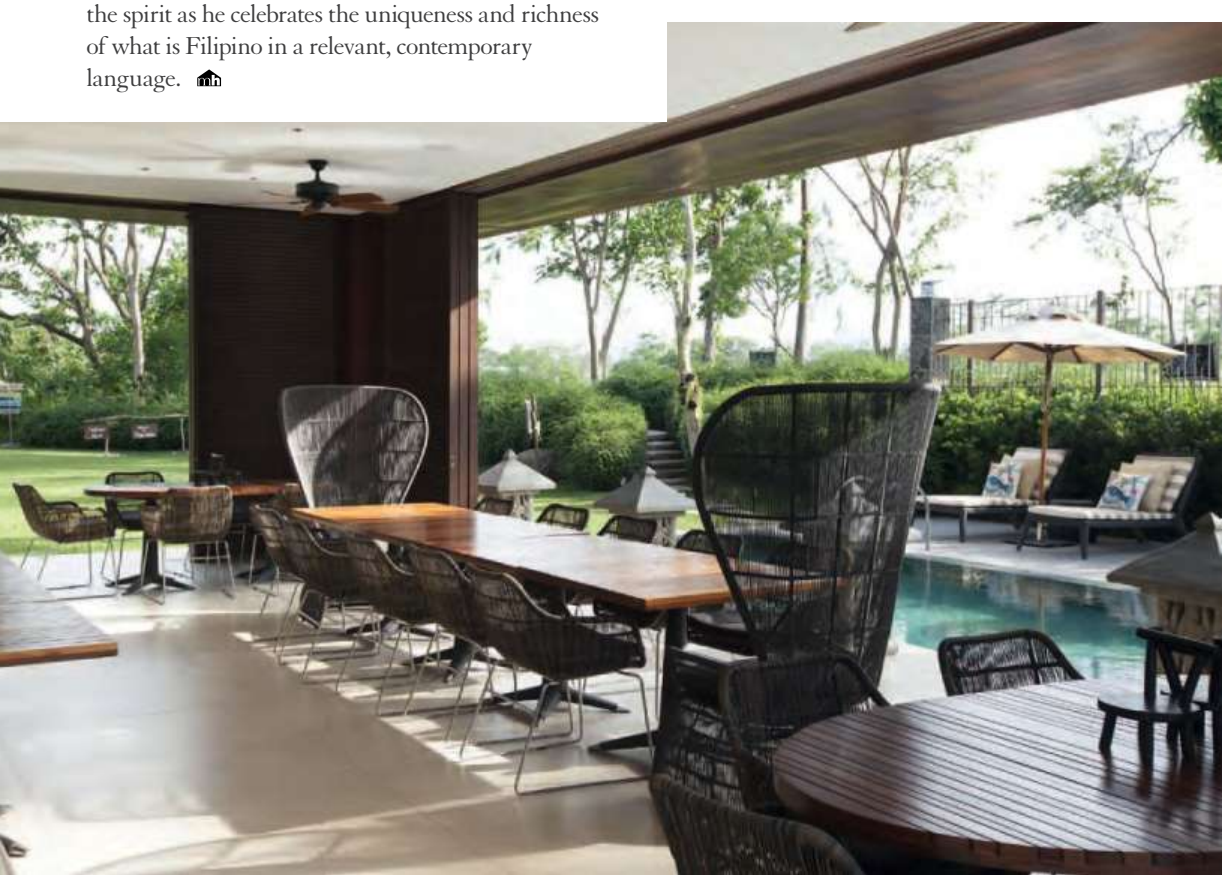


According to Miñana, Villa Marina is a celebration of Philippine identity, whose form is extracted from tribal village houses and made to look contemporary.

Architect Manny Miñana confesses to a deep affection for Filipino culture, and celebrates it in his architecture

This reductionist philosophy of form, function, and detailing reflects Miñana's true nature, and that is, to do away with the irrelevant to pursue that which is important. This philosophy extends to his daily life—he meditates frequently, and is very honest and sincere in his dealings with others. He believes that one needs to go within in order to understand the true nature of things and to clearly express architecture that is not for show, but for the well-being and serenity of its users. Ultimately, Miñana's pursuit is of the spirit as he celebrates the uniqueness and richness of what is Filipino in a relevant, contemporary language.



Above: Staying true to the spirit of reduction, Miñana merged the form of Villa Marina with functionality. Floor-to-ceiling glass in the second floor rooms perfectly illustrate this—once they are opened, light and air fill the space, and an indoor balcony is created.

Left: Miñana has the ability to manage the way people experience and explore spaces. In Villa Marina, he takes people through transitional spaces like the foyer, then "releases" them to the elements of nature by making open areas transparent, as seen in this second floor dining room that opens to the lush greenery outside.

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INDUSTRIAL DESIGN

ERIC PARAS

Destined to showcase the best of Filipino talent

Written by **Mayte Uyenco**
Photos courtesy of **Artelano 11**

Photographed by Joann Bitagcol

Eric Paras is a renowned designer whose craftmanship, work ethic, and dedication to uplifting local artisans helped him achieve international acclaim.

Growing up, interior designer Eric Paras was content with sketching and thus set his sights on becoming an artist. It wasn't until college, when he met a high school friend in his hometown of Tarlac, that Eric was convinced to give interior design a try. This serendipitous encounter led Eric to the University of the Philippines Diliman, where he was honed to become one of the top designers that Filipinos would be proud to call their own.

In his younger days, Eric would often daydream about beautifying houses, and hoped his parents would allow him to transform their backyard into a Japanese rock garden. He now lives his dreams by building furniture and other home accessories. Working on bespoke pieces for Artelano 11, also called A-11, helped Eric become one of the most talked about designers, but he attributes this success to the artisans who've worked with him throughout his career.

A significant part of his training was Nardy Aquino, from whom he has learned to perfect his drawings and renderings that he continues to draw manually until today. "He instilled in me the contemporary eclectic style, particularly the appreciation of different period styles and their application in contemporary-style interiors," says Eric. He is considered an exemplary designer because aside from taking after other people's strengths, he also allows their creativity and work ethics make an impact on his practice.

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This dining room, which has been featured in *Decorating with Flowers* by Robert Caballero and Elizabeth Reyes, showcases French-inspired shelves made of hand-forged steel and solid wood. The *Valmont* bookcases are designed by interior designer Eric Paras and can be purchased from his furniture gallery, A-11.

The crisscrossing of steel in the mirror and cabinet doors is a project that Eric worked on with Jude Tiotuico. He drew inspiration from the shops along the streets of Chinatown.

The *Chateau* club chair is another design that Eric created with Jude Tiotuico, which caught the attention of a Spanish buyer. Until today, this club chair made with steel and solid wood is still being produced. The candleholders in the background serve a double purpose, as the detachable metal shades can be floral containers when inverted.

Eric Paras attributes his success to the artisans who've worked with him throughout his career

These *Luca* cocktail tables are made out of metal sheets that have been combined using a welded metal bar. Antique brass and Verdigris patina were used for the finish.

 Eric Paras may be contacted via *email* ericparas2680@gmail.com. You may also drop by his furniture gallery, A-11, located at 2680 F.B. Harrison Street, Pasay.

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Left: From chairs and throw pillows to ceiling and wall lighting fixtures, TADECO seems to have it all.
Right: The simplicity of these table lamps is complemented by the delicate *ikat* pattern.

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

TADECO HOME

Weaving the future through handmade crafts

Written by **Bettina Z. Bernabe** | *Photos courtesy of* **TADECO Home**

These intricate candleholders and wall coral lamps are designed to resemble life forms on land and on water.

Nowadays, the term social responsibility is so commonly used that the whole concept is usually taken ever so lightly. However, that's not the case for internationally acknowledged handmade crafts company TADECO Home.

Social responsibility means three things for TADECO: preserving the culture of weaving by the T'bolis in Mindanao, promoting sustainable livelihood opportunities for their adopted communities, and producing top-notch products using indigenous materials. These could be well considered as the triumvirate of priorities that has become the core of TADECO's vision and mission since 1989.

As a company that's driven by the skill power of its people, TADECO's come a long way from where it started. From a community development program to becoming one of the Philippines' major banana exporters in Asia and then eventually becoming globally known as a handicrafts manufacturing business, TADECO continues to weave a brighter future for the T'boli weavers of areas such as Lake Sebu and Davao del Sur in Mindanao.

Parallel to their pursuit of promoting a sustainable livelihood for the T'boli weavers, TADECO is also able to protect their culture by making it the root of their social enterprise. They redefine the use of banana and abaca fibers by creating a variety of paper products, lighting fixtures, and furniture out of each well-weaved thread. As a proudly Filipino company that produces handmade crafts in contemporary designs, truly there is a place for TADECO in the future that they are weaving for their people and their products.

The **TADECO Home** showroom is located at the T'boli Weaving Center, Pearl Farm Marina - Guest House, Lizada Drive, Maharlika Hwy (Lanang), Davao City. For inquiries, call (082) 235 2135 or email info@tadecohome.com.

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Photographed by Carina Santos

Imperium (2014)

Photographed by Ed Simon of Studio 100

CONTEMPORARY ARTS

RYAN VILLAMAEL

Imbuing life into paper and bringing this medium to unchartered territory

Written by **Miko Ilas** | *Photos courtesy of* **Ryan Villamael**

When we were young, most of us cut paper into shapes and snowflakes for art projects. Ryan Villamael used to be one such child—only he brought that art to a stratospheric level that won him this year's Ateneo Art Award, and international residency grants in esteemed art institutions in Australia, Singapore, and the U.K.

"Truth is, initially, I wanted to make sculptures and maybe even paint," admits the University of the Philippines alumnus, who fell into the medium of paper accidentally. "As an art student, I was just experimenting with the material and got some encouragement to keep working with the medium. All along, I thought maybe after a year or two of exhibiting my paper cut-outs, I'd be done with the medium and move on to something else."

Ryan would eventually be at home with paper arts, beginning with his "Cut Felt" exhibit in 2011, which was comprised of intricate designs spanning up to 13 feet on the wall. His art, which draws inspiration from his childhood dream of following the footsteps of his biologist mother and his interest in Filipino culture, among others, has been featured in nine shows (three being solo exhibits) for Silverlens Gallery. Ryan expanded his craft from wall displays to three-dimensional, sculpture-like works such as those in his award-winning "Isles" exhibition last year that featured mesmerizing standing figures on maps and in bell jars.

On the cusp of expanding his horizons to new lands, Ryan appreciates but downplays the accolades. "Awards are definitely appreciated, but they're not why I'm an artist," he says. "The thing that excites me is producing better work, truer and braver to the things I want to say."

Photographed by JL Javier

"There's really no fixed procedure in art-making," says Ryan Villamael. "Our minds work in countless and oftentimes unpredictable ways—artist or not—leading to different interpretations and expressions of things."

Isles Series IX (2014)

Thailand BIG+BIH OCTOBER

40TH BANGKOK INTERNATIONAL GIFT FAIR 2015 AND BANGKOK INTERNATIONAL HOUSEWARE FAIR 2015

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BIG+BIH October 2015

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60+ FROM THAILAND

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- Lampang ceramic product cluster match-making community level ceramic product entrepreneurs in Thailand and Japan, leading to reciprocal market expansions in both countries.
- 60+ Project. Showcasing products for the elderly in Japan in a "Select Shop" setting, including furniture / home decorations for the elderly, as well as jewelry, cosmetics and spa products.
- Exhibition on Chiang Mai gift and souvenir cluster developing Chiang Mai gift and souvenir cluster entrepreneurs among 20 member companies in 6 products.
- Design Hall filled with selected trendiest quality products.
- DEmark, an exhibition of products receiving "Design Excellence Award"
- Top of OTOP, showcasing finest quality products from throughout Thailand.
- I+D Style Cafe' and TTM + PM Award: Designed as new modern cafe' with comfort, relaxing and friendly ambience to welcome visitors, the new look cafe' is decorated with ecological and innovative products. Also displayedinside are products receiving Prime Minister's Award and Thailand Trust Mark (TTM). Advisory services will be available for manufacturers/producers to participate in numerous projects by Office of Design and Innovation for Trading Promotion with special emphasis on utilization of green and eco-friendly rawmaterials.
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Plus63 Design Co. creates strategic branding and design solutions. Among their recent clients is Shooting Gallery Studios, a two-studio complex in Makati designed for film and photo shoots.

GRAPHIC DESIGN

DAN MATUTINA
OF PLUS63 DESIGN CO.

Written by **Michelle Tiu Tan** | *Photos courtesy of* **Plus63 Design Co.**

Among designers, Dan Matutina is known for his often playful mixes of material, his neat patterns of color and shape, and his instinctive grasp of space and density. Even in a field rife with signature styles, his distinctive use of geometric lines paired with grainy textures stands out. The effect is at once modern and rustic, and his original creations call to mind both excitement for innovation and nostalgia.

Plus63 Design Co., the studio Dan co-founded with friends, likewise straddles two worlds, producing output for a range of commercial clients while also engaging in socially-oriented projects. But the studio's commitment to quality is the same, whether paid or pro bono.

"We're always hard on ourselves when we brainstorm," says Dan. "We try our best to come up with thoughtful ideas and fresh execution." Rather than cementing a particular style, their main concern is "reflecting the client's personality and the project's objectives."

This is evident from their portfolio, which features everything from custom menus to coffee cups and trophies. But beyond branding, Plus63 also designs solutions for societal problems. In fact, Dan's dream client is the government.

Recently, Plus63 worked on Move Philippines, a disaster preparedness program for kids. Dan says, however, that designing for change doesn't always have to be a large undertaking. Even "little things" like directional signs help. In ways both big and small, Plus63 continues to explore the possibilities of design, sending out ripples of change that are sure to have a positive impact on the country.

Photographed by Ron Mendoza of Studio 100

"I believe that if you want to make an impact," says Dan Matutina, "it should be through the government, because then your work will affect a lot of people."

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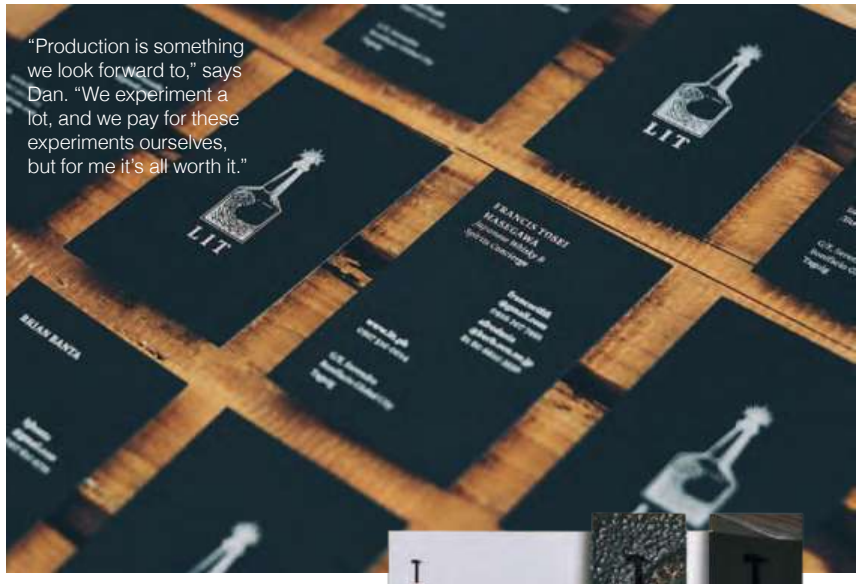
Plus63's recent output includes educational materials for Move Philippines and a new set of trophies for the 2015 Adobo Design Awards.

Photographed by Trish Zamora



"Production is something we look forward to," says Dan. "We experiment a lot, and we pay for these experiments ourselves, but for me it's all worth it."

Plus63 Design Co. is comprised of (from left to right) Roxanne Maniquiz, Bernice Yumul, Dan Matutina, and Jo Malinis.

Custom stationaries and business cards are part of the studio's branding work for companies such as Industria and LIT.

Dan says that Plus63's small size allows them to "choose clients they really want to work with." Also on their client list is Recession Coffee, a specialty shop that operates on a pay-what-you-want scheme.

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by IDr. Edwin Rodrigo

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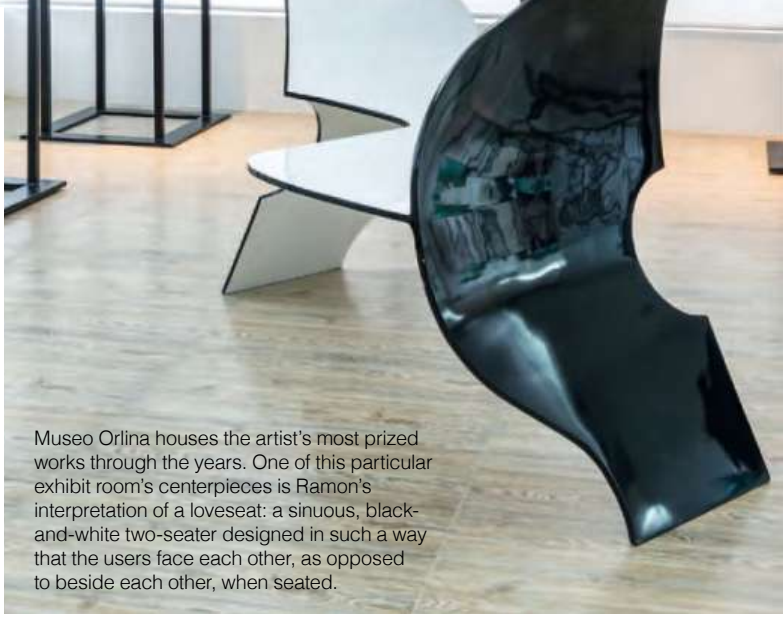
Ramon Orlina strides across the halls of Taal's Basilica de San Martin de Tours like a sentinel—and he does deem himself so, as he considers the preservation of its historical integrity his personal mission.

SCULPTING

RAMON ORLINA

A man of many facets

Written by **Sibyl Layag** | *Photos courtesy of* **Ramon Orlina**



Museo Orlina houses the artist's most prized works through the years. One of this particular exhibit room's centerpieces is Ramon's interpretation of a loveseat: a sinuous, black-and-white two-seater designed in such a way that the users face each other, as opposed to beside each other, when seated.

It takes immense talent to create something that's both ostentatious and subdued, a standout and a complement. Yet even at first glance, that is exactly how one would describe Ramon Orlina's work—and, it could be said, the artist himself.

Widely recognized as the pioneer of modern glass sculpture in the Philippines, Ramon began his artistic career during an apprenticeship at Republic Glass, where, gazing at all the leftover glass that had collected on the factory floor, the architect decided to create art straight out of glass that's already been made. From there, Ramon learned to carve and sculpt the leftover glass as though they are precious marble or granite, elevating the humble material into architectural, delicate yet imposing crystalline figures. With his expert vision and through the use of different texturing techniques, Ramon takes full advantage of the gem-like properties of cut glass, incorporating a kind of luster into them that is just as mesmerizing as those in diamonds and sapphires.

The artist is every bit as multifaceted as his work. He also identifies as a fierce crusader of the preservation of cultural heritage, especially when it comes to his hometown of Taal. And with the inauguration of his Museo Orlina in Tagaytay last year, he is now also a museum owner and exhibitor. Belying the artist's friendly and welcoming demeanor is a formidability that lies in the fact that he is a man who's not afraid to pursue his vision and turn it into reality with all the fiery passion of a bonafide Batangueño.

The First Dance (2015)

Homage to Picasso (2000)

Circle of Life (2015)

Museo Orlina is located at Hollywood Subdivision Rd., Brgy. Tolentino East, Hollywood Subd., Tagaytay City. For inquiries, call (046) 413 2581, email info@museo-orlina.org, or visit museo-orlina.org.

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COMMERCIAL DESIGN

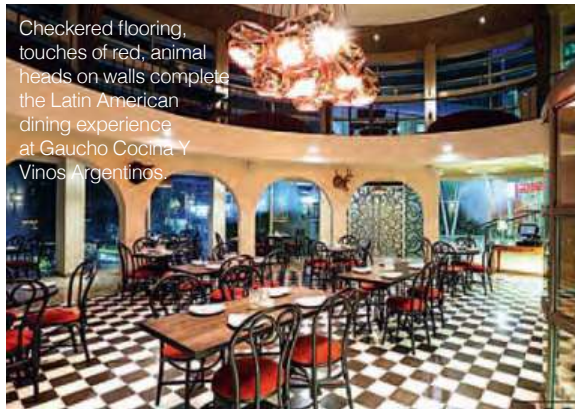
NOEL BERNARDO

When every dining space becomes the center stage

Written by **Kevin Abalos** | *Photos courtesy of* **Noel Bernardo**

Reminiscent of authentic ramen houses in Japan, Mendokoro Ramenba has bar setups with wood and stone elements, as well as industrial accent lighting.

Noel Bernardo attributes his passion for interior design to watching Miami Vice as a kid. His fascination for the era's music, fashion, and lifestyle turned his eye onto designing commercial spaces. "And I knew that I wanted to be able to design spaces that were shown on the series, and maybe also the suits and the pastel pants," he shares.



Checkered flooring, touches of red, animal heads on walls complete the Latin American dining experience at Gaucho Cocina Y Vinos Argentinos.

Dining in style doesn't have to compromise comfort. The yellow and green seating options at Terraz, which offers Asian and Western fusion dishes, make for a classic setting.

Drinking at a café on a street in Shanghai or taking a leisurely stroll on Avenue des Champs-Élysées—these are the vistas evoked by Noel Bernardo's handiwork. It's no easy feat creating spaces that call to mind the distinctive albeit familiar. Tagged as the country's premier interior designer when it comes to commercial spaces, Noel takes restaurant or corporate office interior and turns it on its head. Many of today's hip bars and swinging hotspots owe this revolutionary their modern yet cozy design concepts.

Spurred by the bourgeoning Asian economy in the late 90s, Noel, with his wife, came back to the Philippines from the States to start a company of his own. He brought Elite Concepts Hong Kong with him, this time as a partner, with his former employer staking its name on his expertise and ingenuity. He later on decided to set up shop and founded his own company, ECStudio Inc. With flourish, ECStudio broke into the local scene with Kipling's Cigar Bar Mandarin Oriental and Wasabi Bistro. What followed was a body of work prolific and celebrated.

If you've ever dined in a restaurant in Manila, chances are you've sampled his exceptional take on how dining spaces should look and, more importantly, feel. As large a body of work as he's had, and as unique as his projects are from one another, there's an unmistakable quality tying them. They call to mind the theatrical, which is no big surprise as he's claimed to take on projects as if he were designing a theater stage.

When asked about his creative process, he says, "I would ask my clients to think of a scene from a movie or an image from a magazine. I tell them to picture themselves in that setting, and we then deliver their vision through our design."

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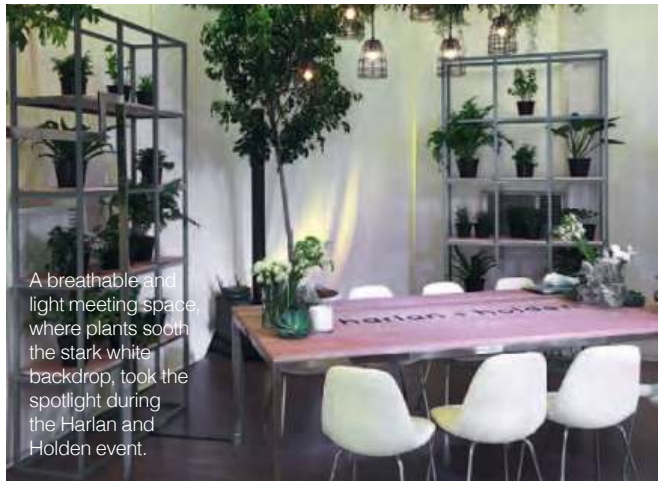
A mix of green accents and a sea of white sofas, this eclectic yet comfortable setup during the Jo Malone London launch in Manila attracted utmost attention.

EVENT DESIGN

All event designs conceptualized by sisters Happy and Cyndi, who bank on spontaneity and individual global tastes, result in remarkable interiors.



A breathable and light meeting space, where plants sooth the stark white backdrop, took the spotlight during the Harlan and Holden event.

MOSS MANILA DESIGN HOUSE

Creating standout interiors in moments that call for it

Written by **Miko Ilas**
Photos courtesy of **Moss Manila Design House**

"We are always mindful of how clients will use our pieces in their homes and where these will be placed," says Cyndi Fernandez-Beltran, pictured above with sister Happy (right). "We don't want to create something so precious and abstract that it will never be touched or used in any way."

The interior design knowledge and event styling expertise of sisters Happy and Cyndi Fernandez have been translated into Moss Manila Design House, a successful enterprise that began in 2008. Taking inspiration from the style of their grandmother, Dr. Felipa Flores, the interior designer siblings developed a keen awareness of design through the encouragement of their parents as well.

"Our grandmother's style always seemed to find its way in our conversations about fashion and furniture because it was mostly how we became aware of what design is at an early age," share Happy and Cyndi.

The duo went on to earn their interior design degree at the University of Santo Tomas and hone their craft in the US, where they adapted cutting-edge and eclectic ideas that they could carry back home. Along with this newly acquired knowledge are furniture pieces and accessories accumulated over Happy and Cyndi's travels across the globe. Happy shares that décor-buying is a planned process that gives importance to the background story of each piece, while Cyndi points out that furniture is bought more spontaneously. "Travel," says Cyndi, "inspires us more than anything else we do. We interpret what we see or experience and turn them into new pieces of furniture."

The creative sisters take pride in the way they "create bold and dramatic interiors with the use of patterns and textures." Their mix of spontaneous inspiration and planned execution earned them recognition from luminaries such as Tessa Prieto-Valdes, who took home pieces from the sisters' collection after they worked together on an interior styling project. All other collections are showcased in Happy and Cyndi's boutique home store called Moss Manila Home, where selections of framed art, obelisks, and original furniture designs reflect the sisters' penchant for elegant styles.

Moss Manila Design House's showroom, Moss Manila Home, is located at 1 Granada Street, Gilmore, Quezon City. For inquiries, call (02) 632.1978 or email concierge@mossmanila.com.

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Left: Robert Blancaflor Group specializes in one-of-a-kind event conceptualization and styling.
Below: A fresh and minimalist table setting

FLORAL DESIGN

ROBERT BLANCAFLOR

No stopping this creative from evolving and innovating

Written by **Kyrah Cheng** | *Photos courtesy of* **Robert Blancaflor Group**

Eighteen years ago, Robert Blancaflor was in a completely different path—he was an investment banker traveling across Asia and America for a multinational banking corporation. During the same time, his brother was about to get married and had asked for Robert's help with the wedding preparations. He wasn't able to find a Manila-based florist that could offer what he wanted, so he decided to take on the project himself.

Growing up in a La Carlota home, which has a wide collection of orchids and plants, makes Robert a natural in the field. "My biggest break in the industry would have to be the wedding of Aga Muhlach and Charlene Gonzales in 2001," shares Robert. "After that, we were able to do numerous celebrity weddings, debuts, and other industry-wide events." Robert sees his style as simple and elegant, playing with just two to three colors and using only timeless accessories. "I like to outdo myself; thus, the inspiration for the next project stems from that goal. I also like doing something personal based on my clients' needs and personalities," he says.

After almost 20 years in the business, Robert has remained on top. His talents have been recognized internationally, and he credits such success to continuous innovation. "We always make it a point to offer something different to our clients. This is why our company has expanded into a full-scope events and styling company," says Robert. "Copying will not make you big and remembered. You're only as good as your last event."

Left: Robert Blancaflor believes that the local industry will continue to grow and be recognized by foreign clients.

Below: Beautiful flowers lined with elegant candelabras

Manila's One of a Kind International Cuisine and Produce Market in the Heart of Mandaluyong City, Pioneer St. Market

September 5, 2015 marked the opening of Pioneer St. Market, a one-stop destination for food lovers looking for fresh produce, gourmet dishes, artisan delicacies, and imported wine and specialty crafts.

VIPs including Dr. Mendez and Mayor & Madame Abalos conducted the ribbon cutting and were treated to a wide variety of offerings from vendors featuring their unique products like Shawarma Pizza, Fresh Roasted Espresso, Tacos and Burritos, Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Juices, Monster Burgers, Authentic Filipino Dishes, Roast Beef Belly and Tasty Tucker's famous Aussie Meat Pies to name a few.

The day was full of exciting activities, which started, with an hour of Zumba with over 200 participants, supported by Madame Abalos and Councilor Charice Abalos.

A petting zoo with rabbits and guinea pigs was on hand for the kids to enjoy, right after having their face painted with their favorite designs.

There was a London-based chef who presented on-stage how to cook a mean malunggay pesto pasta dish.

A 5-person burger eating challenge was a highlight as well, which was won by Philip Briggs, an Australian who loves finding new places to eat and new challenges such as this, "Wicked awesome challenge that was!" He commented, still trying to lick his fingers.

HMR Auctions was on-stage with bidders whipping up their bid cards to snatch some cool gadgets, paintings and items for as low as P200. The Lady Volcanoes, following their recent bronze medal win in the SEA Games, "strutted their stuff" wearing Loro brand statement shirts.

In the evening, the launch was capped off with a stunning acoustic performance by Guilty Acoustic Pleasures and Brown Inc with customers enjoying delightful food and drinks offered by Pioneer St. Market's vendors whilst listening to their music.

Special Thanks to our sponsors, HMR Trading Haus, Tasty Tucker, San Miguel Brewery Inc., Mendez Medical Group, JLT, Sunbeam Impex Inc., Zoomanity Group, Aro-en, Auwant and Aliw Broadcasting Network for making the event a success.

Pioneer St. Market is open to accepting events related to food art and culture. Contact Pam Belardo or Mary Rose Bitagana at (02)634-0526 or email at pam.belardo@hmrphils.com.

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Pioneer St. Market

TRADE SHOW

MANILA FAME

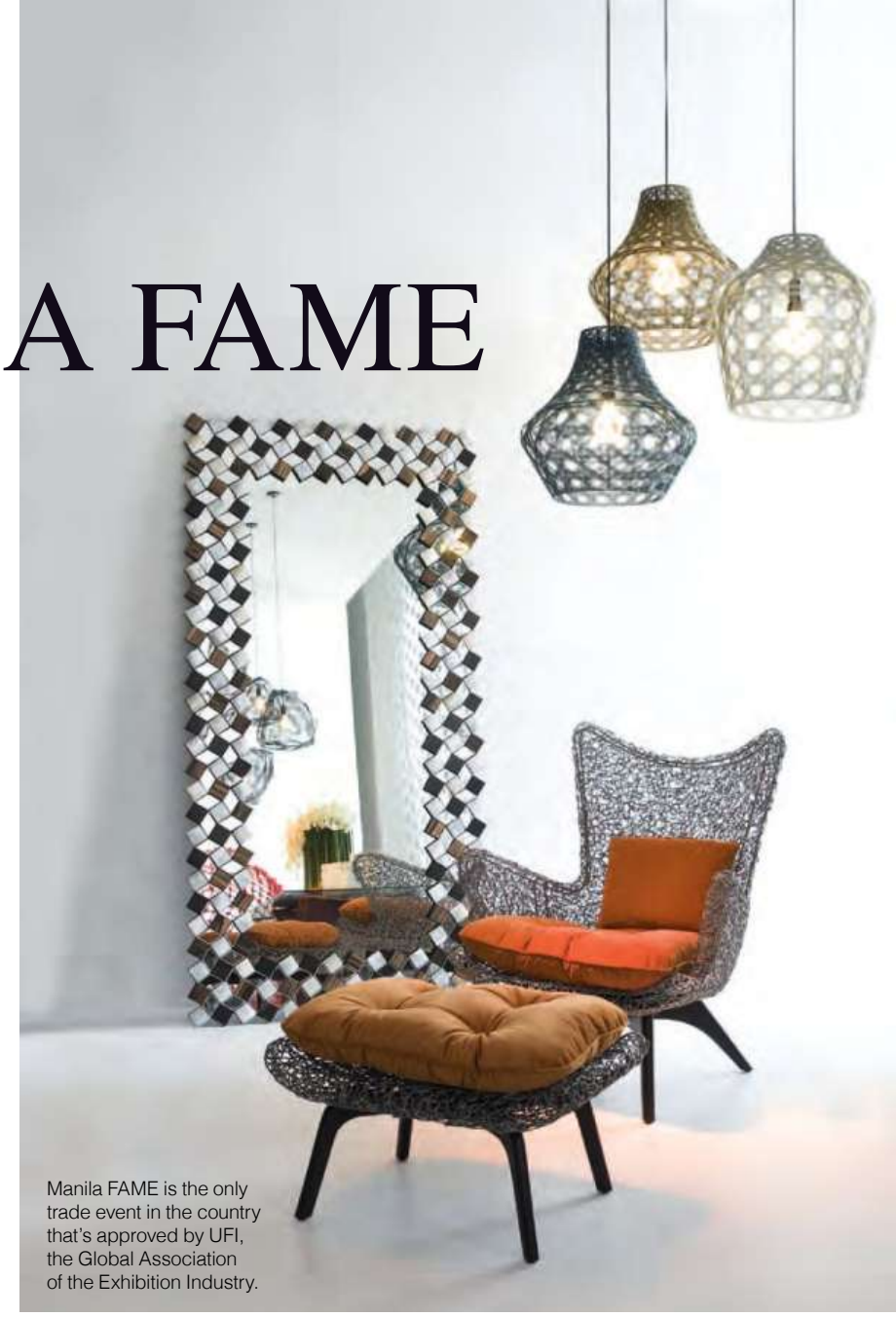
Support local as Manila FAME guarantees unique finds

Written by **Kyrah Cheng** | *Photographed by* **Mike Cuevas and Ed Simon of Studio 100**

Anticipation always surrounds Manila FAME, the country's most renowned design and lifestyle event, which is also one of the longest-running trade shows in Asia and the Pacific. Every year since its formation in 1983, it has successfully provided small and medium enterprises with an effective platform to showcase locally crafted pieces to a global market.

Organized by the Philippine Department of Trade and Industry through the Center for International Trade Expositions and Missions, Manila FAME is a three-day biannual event held once in March and again in October. The first leg of Manila FAME this year certainly met the expectations of design aficionados. Every corner featured carefully curated pieces—majority being crafted out of conventional local materials that took a new form through modern twists and trends.

Standout creations include furniture pieces by Vito Selma that have unique shapes and textures, handcrafted wooden home accessories by Basket and Weaves that have a raw and natural finish, and garments by Filip + Inna that marry ancient weaving with contemporary fashion. Find more designs that, aside from having a rich history, also carry an inspiring story, in the second series of Manila FAME 2015 this October 15 to 18 at the SMX Convention Center.



Manila FAME is the only trade event in the country that's approved by UFI, the Global Association of the Exhibition Industry.

Left: Triboa Bay Living owner Randy Viray describes the brand's aesthetics as casual and resort-like.

Right: Ann Pamintuan's *Cocoon* chairs were also featured in Maison & Objet Asia 2015 held at Marina Bay Sands Expo and Convention Center in Singapore.

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Cynthia, one half of the Almario sisters, admits that traveling plays a big inspiration. "I love attending fairs in Manila, Milan, and Paris, where I am exposed to the latest trends in furniture and accessories," she says.

TRENDSETTERS

IVY & CYNTHIA ALMARIO

From California to Manila, these two are icons of sophistication

Written by **Cy Yambao** | *Photographed by* **Mark Jacob of Studio 100**

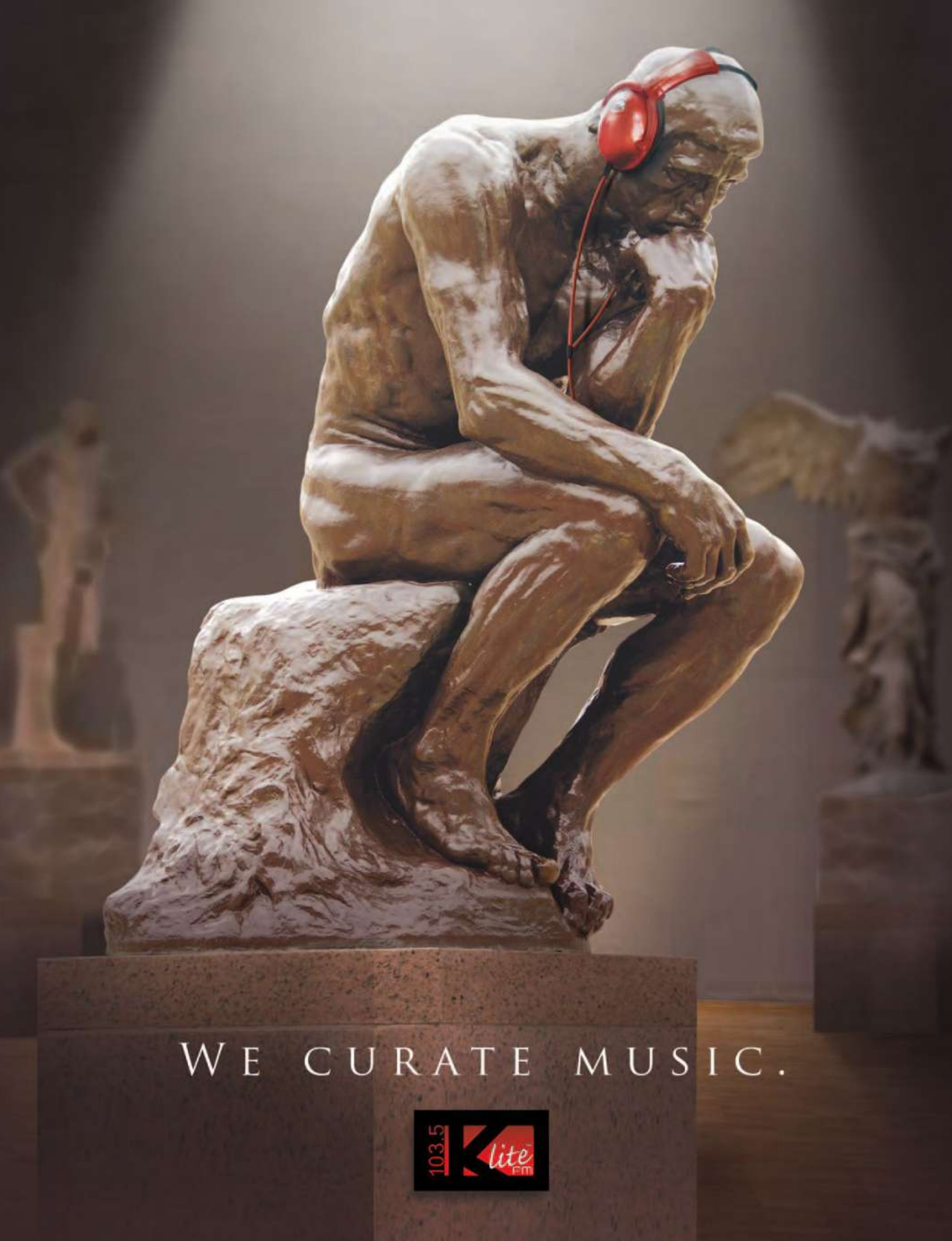
Photo courtesy of Ivy and Cyntiha Almario

"If we were to have a signature style, I would say a very well-thought-out interior architecture (my strength) coupled with well-curated furniture and accessories (Cynthia's strength)," says Ivy Almario(left), pictured above with sister and fellow interior designer Cynthia. "The combination of both, I believe, creates the impactful look that one may say is what's consistent about our work."

Twenty years proved to be more than enough time for sisters Ivy and Cynthia Almario to earn their rightful spot in the industry. Since launching their own design studio, Atelier Almario, in 1995, the interior designer tandem has accumulated a long list of clients from high-end residential properties to commercial and office spaces to hotels and resorts. In all such projects, the Almarios have clearly defined their identity.

"Atelier Almario believes in creating spaces that are the best version of a client's dream," says Cynthia, who, with her sister, spent more than a decade practicing in California. "We are generally open to their ideas, which we integrate with our years of knowledge and depth of experience to create interiors that are warm, sophisticated, and impactful." The duo is well-known for their masterful combinations of colors and textures—often taking inspiration from the most unexpected things like wrought iron for a headboard and a variety of spices for a room palette—that find a balance with carefully selected furniture pieces and accessories.

Despite the constant recognition, both Ivy and Cynthia believe that a greater sense of fulfilment comes from being able to give back to the country and gradually contribute to nation building. The sisters started the road to this goal by collaborating with GKonomics and Gawad Kalinga, as well as with ASAM, a program that promotes improved livelihood and cultural preservation in impoverished communities. "It is very rewarding to be part of making people's dream houses come true," says Ivy. "This profession has been very generous to us through the years, and hopefully through our talents, we can likewise give back and focus on a bigger stage."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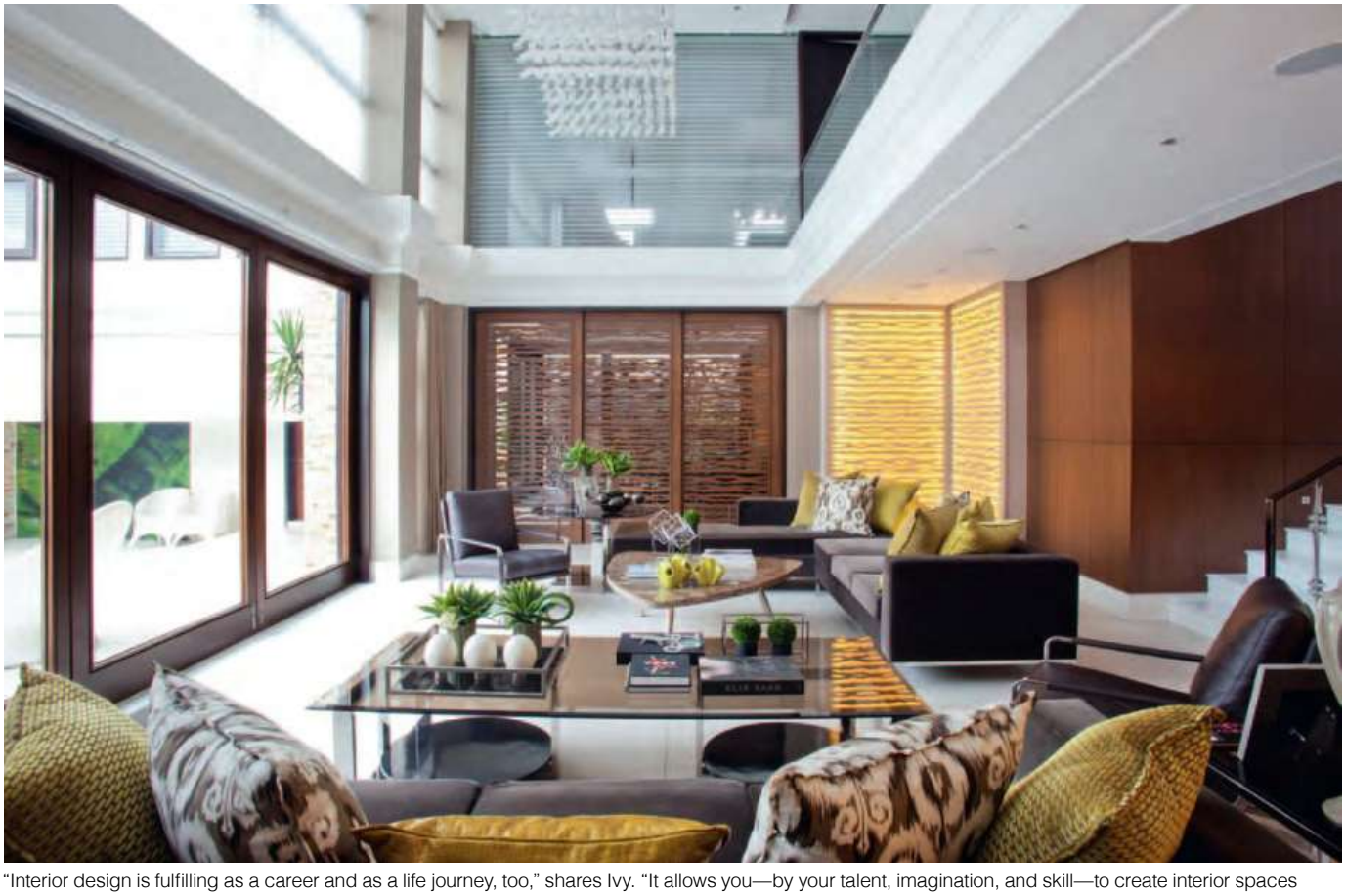
"Atelier Almario believes in creating spaces that are the best version of a client's dream"

Above: It was Ivy and Cynthia's aunt, the late interior designer Myrna Adriano, who influenced the two to follow the same path. They also draw inspiration from the design aesthetics of Christian Liaigre, Anouska Hempel, Zaha Hadid, and Patricia Urquiola, to name a few.

Right: "The most rewarding thing about being an interior designer is the ability to transform the lives of our clients by providing them with dream homes that they will enjoy for a very long time," says Cynthia.



"Interior design is fulfilling as a career and as a life journey, too," shares Ivy. "It allows you—by your talent, imagination, and skill—to create interior spaces that elevate people's appreciation of their lives by being cocooned in comfortable and aesthetically pleasing surroundings."

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"Inspiration does not strike you like a bolt of lightning," says Kenneth. "As a designer, I find inspiration absolutely from the most mundane things around me to the most exotic locales I'm privileged to visit."

INFLUENCER

KENNETH COBONPUE

A tribute to the Cebuano furniture designer who has proven that Filipino talent can dominate the global design industry

Written by **Cy Yambao** | *Photos courtesy of* **Kenneth Cobonpue**

"I believe that design is a living process that is forever transforming in response to the changing world," says internationally acclaimed furniture designer Kenneth Cobonpue. "Sticking to a winning formula while safe can only kill creativity and innovation."

The mere mention of Kenneth Cobonpue's name brings a certain sense of familiarity and pride. For almost three decades since starting his career, the Cebu-based furniture designer has produced iconic designs that position the Philippines as a globally competitive nation in the said field. But while Kenneth continues to earn international recognition, his success always roots back home.

"I have always wanted to be a designer. I was born into the world of furniture through my mother, who was a designer herself," shares Kenneth, recalling how his mother's original creations went against the tide of traditional reproduction that was prevalent in the 80s. "From her I learned the value of being unique and true to my calling. She taught me how to reach out and inspire others through design."

Kenneth is known for working with locally sourced materials—abaca, *buri*, rattan, bamboo, and natural fibers, to name a few—and integrating them to

Kenneth's first influence would have to be his mother, who is an interior and furniture designer that was a pioneer in her craft. "I learned so many things from her, but chief among them is the value of truly original design and the cultivation of passion that must accompany it," he says.

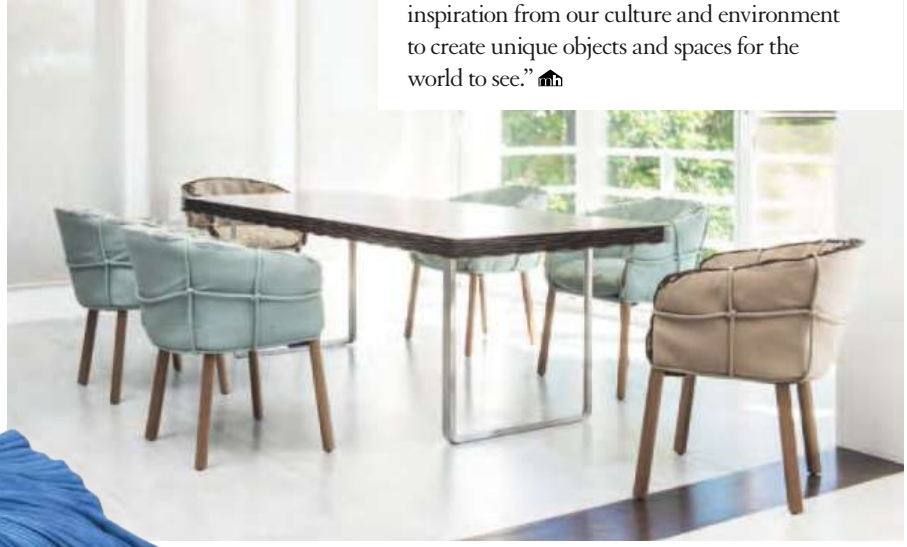
The *Yoda* chair, whose design resembles tall blades of grass, is considered as one of Kenneth's design triumphs.

innovative handmade production processes. He prefers not to be boxed in a single aesthetic, however, so he makes it a point to design based on instinct and inspiration. Such motivation leads to a stunning new collection each year that makes its much-awaited debut in design shows both locally and abroad.

"More important than my work itself is the ability to inspire and motivate thousands of young people to pursue their passion for creativity and design," says Kenneth, who eventually hopes to put up a design school that focuses on the artistry of craft and individual design. "I hope my life is a testament to what is possible when we take inspiration from our culture and environment to create unique objects and spaces for the world to see."

The *Pigalle* dining table made of hand-tied abaca rope strands is said to be inspired by the contours of the female form.

While it looks uncomfortable at first glance, the *Chiquita* stool made of rattan poles that rest on polyurethane foam actually provides a pleasant sitting experience.



Also one of Kenneth's most iconic designs is the *Bloom* chair, whose form mimics a blossoming flower.

"More important than my work itself is the ability to inspire and motivate thousands of young people to pursue their passion for creativity and design"

Kenneth Cobonpue Manila is located at The Residences, San Lorenzo Tower, Greenbelt, Makati. For inquiries, call (02) 576 1639, email info@kennethcobonpue.com, or visit kennethcobonpue.com.

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